THEY OPENED THE SHOW
The Main Characters of Genesis

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THE MAIN CHARACTERS OF GENESIS

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LIVING FAITH SERIES
ADULT STUDIES

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Designed and illustrated by Terry O'Brien.

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ONE

ADAM AND EVE
FREEDOM TO DIE

INTRODUCTION

Genesis, the first book of the Bible, is like a prelude. It sets the stage, fills the gaps, opens the great show of God's dealings with creation.

Genesis is a book which arose from the need of a settled people to understand and appreciate their roots. It is a collection of material which had been passed on from generation to generation, material with obscure origins in time long since past. This material is divided into two major sections: the stories dealing with the primeval world (Genesis 1—11) and the stories dealing with the patriarchs (Genesis 12—50).

In this study, we will be concerned with stories from both these sections—stories with which many people have been familiar since childhood. In fact, it is possible that for some people, these six stories may be too familiar: they remember the stories' details, but have forgotten their meanings. Forgetting need not be a barrier to learning, however; it can allow us to look at the stories afresh and find new meaning in them.

The stories found in the first eleven chapters of Genesis were not written as historical documents, nor were they intended to be understood as such. They should be seen as meditations in story form about life's basic questions such as, How are we to relate to God? Why can't people get along with one another?

As you read this book, read the stories directly from the Bible as well. (These stories—sometimes shortened because of space limitations—are reproduced in this book, but feel free to use your own Bible.) If you can, read the biblical stories both before and after reading this book's narrative.

GENESIS 2:4b—3:24, portions thereof

2:4b In the day that the LORD God
made the earth and the heavens,
[5]when no plant of the field was yet
in the earth and no herb of the
field had yet sprung up—for the
LORD God had not caused it to
rain upon the earth, and there was
no man to till the ground; [6]but a

mist went up from the earth and
watered the whole face of the
ground— [7]then the LORD God
formed man of dust from the
ground, and breathed into his nos-
trils the breath of life; and man
became a living being. [8]And the
LORD God planted a garden in
Eden, in the east; and there he put
the man whom he had formed.
[9]And out of the ground the LORD
God made to grow every tree that
is pleasant to the sight and good
for food, the tree of life also in the
midst of the garden, and the tree
of the knowledge of good and
evil. . . .
15 The LORD God took the man
and put him in the garden of Eden
to till it and keep it. [16]And the
LORD God commanded the man,
saying, "You may freely eat of
every tree of the garden; [17]but of
the tree of the knowledge of good
and evil you shall not eat, for in
the day that you eat of it you shall
die."
18 Then the LORD God said, "It
is not good that the man should be
alone; I will make him a helper fit
for him." [19]So out of the ground
the LORD God formed every beast
of the field and every bird of the
air, and brought them to the man
to see what he would call them;
and whatever the man called every
living creature, that was its name.
[20]The man gave names to all cattle,
and to the birds of the air, and to
every beast of the field; but for the
man there was not found a helper
fit for him. [21]So the LORD God
caused a deep sleep to fall upon
the man, and while he slept took
one of his ribs and closed up its
place with flesh; [22]and the rib
which the LORD God had taken
from the man he made into a
woman and brought her to the
man. [23]Then the man said,

"This at last is bone of my
bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called Woman,
because she was taken out of
Man."

[24]Therefore a man leaves his father
and his mother and cleaves to his
wife, and they become one flesh.
[25]And the man and his wife were
both naked, and were not
ashamed.

3:1 Now the serpent was more
subtle than any other wild creature
that the LORD God had made. He
said to the woman, "Did God say,
'You shall not eat of any tree of the
garden'?" [2]And the woman said to
the serpent, "We may eat of the
fruit of the trees of the garden;
[3]but God said, 'You shall not eat of
the fruit of the tree which is in the
midst of the garden, neither shall
you touch it, lest you die.' " [4]But
the serpent said to the woman,
"You will not die. [5]For God knows
that when you eat of it your eyes
will be opened, and you will be
like God, knowing good and evil."
[6]So when the woman saw that the
tree was good for food, and that it
was a delight to the eyes, and that
the tree was to be desired to make
one wise, she took of its fruit and
ate; and she also gave some to her
husband, and he ate. [7]Then the
eyes of both were opened, and they
knew that they were naked; and
they sewed fig leaves together and
made themselves aprons.
8 And they heard the sound of
the LORD God walking in the gar-
den in the cool of the day, and the
man and his wife hid themselves
from the presence of the LORD
God among the trees of the gar-
den. [9]But the LORD God called to
the man, and said to him, "Where
are you?" [10]And he said, "I heard
the sound of thee in the garden,
and I was afraid, because I was
naked; and I hid myself." [11]He
said, "Who told you that you were
naked? Have you eaten of the tree
of which I commanded you not to

eat?" [12]The man said, "The
woman whom thou gavest to be
with me, she gave me fruit of the
tree, and I ate." [13]Then the LORD
God said to the woman, "What is
this that you have done?" The
woman said, "The serpent
beguiled me, and I ate." . . .
[16]To the woman [the LORD] said,
"I will greatly multiply your pain
in childbearing;
in pain you shall bring forth
children,
yet your desire shall be for your
husband,
and he shall rule over you."

[17]And to Adam he said,
"Because you have listened to the
voice of your wife,
and have eaten of the tree
of which I commanded you,
'You shall not eat of it,'
cursed is the ground because of
you;
in toil you shall eat of it all the
days of your life;
[18]thorns and thistles it shall bring
forth to you;
and you shall eat the plants of
the field.
[19]In the sweat of your face
you shall eat bread
till you return to the ground,
for out of it you were taken;
you are dust,
and to dust you shall return."
20 The man called his wife's
name Eve, because she was the
mother of all living. [21]And the
LORD God made for Adam and for
his wife garments of skins, and
clothed them.
22 Then the LORD God said,
"Behold, the man has become like
one of us, knowing good and evil;
and now, lest he put forth his hand
and take also of the tree of life,
and eat, and live for ever"—
[23]therefore the LORD God sent him
forth from the garden of Eden, to
till the ground from which he was
taken. [24]He drove out the man; and
at the east of the garden of Eden
he placed the cherubim, and a
flaming sword which turned every
way, to guard the way to the tree of
life.

The story of Adam and Eve deals with the importance of living as God's creatures in a world which God created and which is good. It is a story about the relationship between two human beings and about their relationship with the Divine Being. It is also a story about you and me.

In order to understand the story better, we can divide it into four sections: the creation of man (2:4b–17); the creation of a helper (2:18–25); man and woman in the garden (3:1–7); and the results of their actions (3:8–24).

CREATION (2:4b–17)

In Genesis 2:4b–17 we read about the creation of man and the planting of the garden, a good place for him to live. He is to tend the garden, care for God's creation. This occupation is also good: the man is to receive the benefits of the garden. God has given the man all of the resources necessary for his life.

Two trees are identified: the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The tree of life represents the food of immortality, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil acknowledges the limit to human freedom. To eat of this second tree would allow Adam to share in divine knowledge.

Even though these trees are named, they are not the most important part of the story. More significant is God's command:

> "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die" (2:16b–17).

This command is a prohibition. It is not explained; it need not be. All that matters is that God has spoken. God is in charge and expects complete and unwavering obedience.

CREATION OF THE HELPER (2:18–25)

In the second section of the story, man's helper is created. He needs another human; it is not good to be alone. Human beings are beings in community. And so, God creates someone new—woman.

Woman gives the man joy, for they belong together. They are one. Neither is inferior to the other.

DISOBEDIENCE IN THE GARDEN (3:1–7)

The third section of the story moves the reader into a new area of concern. Here we have temptation and disobedience, the giving in to temptation. We would do well to try to read this section as if for the first time, leaving behind whatever preconceived understandings we have about the story. For example, in much popular theology, the serpent has been thought of as Satan. But that is not what the story says. The serpent is simply a serpent, a creation of God. The serpent is not a representative of evil.

The serpent becomes a vehicle for the temptation. The serpent causes the two people in the story to reconsider God's command. Interestingly enough, the serpent appears to tell the truth about the tree in the midst of the garden: Adam and Eve do not die on the day they eat from the tree. After lunch, they even have time to sew aprons.

The snake was indeed clever in its approach. The snake did not begin with a direct attack upon God and a call for Eve to disobey. When sin appears in such obvious form, it is much more easy to put aside. Indeed, as the conversation begins, Eve is in the position of correcting the snake concerning God. But she allows herself to get swept into a conversation that sows doubts and desires in her mind. Is God telling the truth? Is God really saying what is best for me, or is God simply out to safeguard the divine position?

The temptation causes the two humans to reflect upon the reasonableness of God's command. Eve considers the attractiveness of the tree and the desirability of having God-like wisdom, the tree's fruit. Adam and Eve respond to the temptation by deceiving themselves, by convincing themselves that God didn't really mean what was said, that there were benefits to be achieved by disobeying God.

Notice that the sin that Adam and Eve commit is not "a plunge into moral evil."[1] That is, they were not attracted by what we might call immorality, a wild time, wickedness, becoming subhuman. Their sin was in the opposite direction—to try to become more than human. It was primarily the sin of pride.

> The nature of their deed was clearly disobedience brought about by a desire to "be like God." [Adam and Eve] had stepped over the limits of their freedom by their desire to experience all things without restriction, authority, or limitation. The man and the woman together attempted to break down the barrier between Creator and creature and thus to play God. It happens to all humans who constantly devise the rules to suit selfish desires rather than to live as the creatures God made.[2]

We shouldn't imagine that this Adam-Eve-sin story is only for people who wallow in what "decent society" considers sin. Stephen O. Swanson, for instance, discusses the seven deadly sins and the seven deadly virtues; by "deadly virtues" he means the way we can twist even outwardly good actions into wrong deeds. He begins:

1. Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis, rev. ed.* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972), 89.
2. Foster R. McCurley, *Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers*, Proclamation Commentaries (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 23.

> Martin Luther, St. Augustine, Pope Gregory the Great, and many other big-name churchmen think pride is *the* sin—the root of all other sins. We should all believe it. Pride is the drive, the desire in all of us to be like God.[3]

The man and the woman have discovered freedom. They can indeed do as they will; they are not forced to obey God's command; their eyes are opened. But in the utilization of that freedom they have found out more than they needed to know and more than they wanted to know. And that knowledge is going to lead them where they do not want to go.

CONSEQUENCES (3:8–24)

In the final section of this story, the human beings find that there is no escape from the consequences of their action, the assertion of their freedom.

For Adam and Eve the result of their sin is a changed situation. All of a sudden, they become concerned about their well-being. They know they are naked, and they try to hide from God. Before, God's presence was part of life; but now God becomes something to fear, a threat. What has happened is that by looking out for themselves, they have opted for an alternative to living under God's rule. She eats and he eats and their world is changed. Their lives become fraught with anxiety and deception, and their relationship with God has been broken. They have broken the command, and they are ashamed.

Even before God hands out specific punishments, there are consequences of Adam's and Eve's sin. A rift begins to grow in their own relationship, a break which continues to widen when Adam fails to support Eve and blames her for his eating the fruit. They hide from God, or attempt to. They are afraid; and rather than seek God's forgiveness and help, they try to get farther away. Rebellion against God is shown, therefore, in its two aspects: the relationship of person with God is destroyed, and the relationship of person with person is also fractured.

At this point, the story assumes the form of a trial with God as the judge, questioning the defendants. Notice that for Adam and Eve there is no defense. They are naked and they are ashamed. Fig leaves are of no help. When they stand before God and are questioned, they have nothing to say which would

3. Stephen O. Swanson, *The Double Cross* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1980), 13. Reprinted by permission.

in the least justify their actions. They are consumed with fear and with the desire to save their lives.

Eve couldn't excuse herself with the plea that the "devil made me do it." No one made her do it. True, when God catches up to Adam and Eve, Adam tries to pass the buck, blaming Eve and even God—"the woman *you* put here" (3:12, Today's English Version). And Eve tries to pass the buck, in turn, to the snake. But it's not convincing. In chapter 3, verse 6, we saw Eve standing in front of the tree considering the joy of eating from the tree and the benefit of being wise. Likewise, Adam didn't put up much of a fight when it was his turn to eat. They were free to choose; but once having chosen and gotten caught, they tried to push the blame off onto others, including God.

How true to life! People who neglect safety and health rules and suffer as a result wonder why God is punishing them. We try to find reasons for our faults in the way we were raised or the kind of neighborhood we came from. Whenever we do something unkind, we blame it on our mood or the persons with whom we must work. We too try to pass the buck.

For Adam and Eve, there was no defense. They were guilty and had to face punishment. We would expect them to die, for they broke God's command (2:17). Amazingly, however, they do not die immediately. Rather, other penalties are substituted: childbearing became painful, the intended male-female equality was broken, and work became toil. The most basic aspects of men's and women's lives became difficult, painful.

These punishments are, nevertheless, a miracle of grace. Adam and Eve are allowed to live, even though they have been rightly judged guilty and are under the sentence of death. Then the miracle is multiplied. Not only are Adam and Eve allowed to live, God even deals with their shame by clothing them. God watches over them even as they are cast out of the garden.

So life goes on under new circumstances. There is no perfect garden. Relationships are broken, and we are ashamed. But the Creator affirms this life in spite of us. God says yes even when we say no. And God watches protectively over us, offering not death but hope.

TODAY'S STORY

"Why is it that we never seem to have enough money?" Janice complained as she sat paying bills at the desk. "I could under-

stand it ten years ago when the kids were in high school and I was working only two days a week. But now both kids are on their own, and you and I work full-time at excellent jobs. I just don't understand where the money goes."

David lowered the newspaper and grinned at his wife. "For starters, ten years ago the cabin in the mountains was just that—an unheated, three-room rustic cabin. We sank a bundle into *that* place."

Janice laughed. "I guess we did get carried away. But it was worth it. Now we have a comfortable place to go to, no matter what season of the year. And there's plenty of room for friends to visit."

"Then this year there was the new VCR camera system, my new car, and the kitchen remodeling," David continued. "Those were three major expenses."

"It does seem that the more we have, the more we feel we need," Janice mused. She chewed the end of the pen thoughtfully, then added, "But I believe we deserve what we have. We've worked hard for it. Why not get some pleasure for ourselves?"

David nodded, picked up the newspaper, then laid it down again. "By the way, you know that bonus I got last week? I put it all in an IRA."

"I thought we were going to give some of it to the church hunger fund," Janice said in surprise.

"I know," David replied, "But the IRA is a tax write-off too, and it will benefit us in our retirement. We need to look out for ourselves. Who knows what's ahead in the future?"

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In what ways is this story similar to the story of Adam and Eve?
2. What temptations does this couple face?
3. To what degree is their concern for their retirement justified, and to what extent does it represent a desire to control their own futures?
4. How does pride influence Janice and David?
5. What are some examples from your own life of "looking out for number one"?

TWO

CAIN AND ABEL
DON'T BLAME ME

GENESIS 4:1–16

4:1 Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have gotten a man with the help of the LORD." [2]And again, she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a tiller of the ground. [3]In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground, [4]and Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, [5]but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. [6]The LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen? [7]If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is couching at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it."

8 Cain said to Abel his brother, "Let us go out to the field." And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel, and killed him. [9]Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?" [10]And the LORD said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. [11]And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. [12]When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength; you shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth." [13]Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is greater than I can bear. [14]Behold, thou hast driven me this day away from the ground; and from thy face I shall be hidden; and I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will slay me." [15]Then the LORD said to him, "Not so! If any one slays Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." And the LORD put a mark on Cain, lest any who came upon him should kill him. [16]Then Cain went away from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

The story of Cain and Abel, Genesis 4:1–16, is an illustration of what can happen when human beings fail to live according to God's will. In a sense, it is a continuation of the story of Adam and Eve in that it describes human rebellion against God's intention for creation.

Adam and Eve claimed the power of God for themselves by eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Cain claims the prerogative of God by exercising the power of

life and death. In the same way as his parents, Cain acts in rebellion toward the One who gives him life and shows him the right way to live.

Thus the story of Cain and Abel is again a story about relationships and the importance of living in community. It is about the need to care for one another. The writer of this story is interested in what happens to Cain, and the story in its essence is about Cain's relationship to God.

The story is sparse in detail and moves rapidly to its conclusion. Abel, Cain's brother, is like a stick figure in a drawing; he is not fleshed out. He is ultimately of little importance to the main thrust of the story. Cain's murder of Abel is just mentioned, not described. What the writer wants us to consider is what Cain's act of rebellion means to Cain and to God. The writer forces reflection on the consequences which result from such an act.

THE SETTING (4:1–7)

In chapter 4, verses 1 through 7 the plot is set and the framework is erected. Abel, the shepherd, and Cain, the farmer, bring their respective offerings for worship. These offerings represent their particular ways of life, and both men assume that what they have to offer is perfectly acceptable. There is no indication that one's offering is less worthy than the other. In addition, there is nothing here which would suggest that the brothers feel any animosity toward one another or that there is a sense of rivalry between them.

The Lord, however, was not pleased with Cain's offering. No reason is given for God's rejection of it, and no purpose is served in trying to imagine why Abel's offering was acceptable while Cain's was not. True, without an explanation the passage gives the impression that God is acting in an arbitrary fashion in choosing one offering over the other. It is almost as if God were forcing Cain to respond. But as the story's point is not really the offerings themselves, we should not read too much into this sketchy introduction.

God does not push Cain into doing evil. In fact, God gives a word of warning to him by saying in effect that he can do what is right, but he must watch out. Cain must indeed be careful. Sin "desires" Cain. Sin is a reality which can ensnare us in its fatal grip. Sin is very powerful—nothing to play around with. So God warns Cain, "you must master it" (4:7).

THE MURDER (4:8)

Cain does not follow God's advice. In the succeeding verses, 8 and 9, the murder occurs. Gerhard von Rad calls it "the first murder, for God's sake!"[4] The murder is mentioned almost in passing. The writer presses on. He has other things in mind.

For Cain, of course, the murder was all-important. That was his sin. Or is it better to say the result of his sin? The murder erupted from his anger and rage. The sin was not the anger itself, but rather in how Cain dealt with his anger. In this instance, as happens so often today, rage became translated into murder.

Cain co-opted for himself the power of life and death over another human being. The problem for Cain is that, that power

4. von Rad, 105.

belongs only to God. Cain has sinned not only against his brother, Abel, but ultimately against God:

> According to the Old Testament view, blood and life belong to God alone; whenever a man commits murder he attacks God's very own right of possession. To destroy life goes far beyond man's proper sphere. Spilled blood cannot be shoveled underground; it cries aloud to heaven and complains directly to the Lord of life. [5]

JUDGMENT (4:9–14)

Cain doesn't get away with his sin. Like the story of his parents' sin, there follows a confrontation with the Creator of both Cain and Abel; and Cain is no match for God. He tries to talk his way out of judgment by outright lies: "I do not know where my brother is," he says. But Cain cannot escape God's presence, nor can he escape God's claim on his attention.

Cain then asks a question which has become very famous, "Am I my brother's keeper?" (4:9b). The clear implication, of course, is "yes!" God answers, "The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground" (4:10b). He is indeed his brother's keeper. No matter how hard he tries, Cain cannot deny responsibility; he is charged with caring for his brother's welfare.

We, too, are the "brother's keeper." Cain was responsible, and we are responsible. Human community, as God intends it to be lived out, depends upon that basic moral position. Human beings cannot survive unless there is a shared sense of responsibility for one another. Every person on the face of the earth is brother and sister to every other person. That is one lesson presented to us in this story—a lesson which has assumed tremendous importance in view of the fact that nations and their peoples are at this moment using weapons of political, military, and economic warfare upon each other.

In verses 10 through 14 we learn that not only are human beings responsible for one another, but also the denial of that responsibility brings horrendous consequences. In Cain's case, there is swift and sure punishment. It is twofold: first, the ground from which he had taken his livelihood is to yield nothing, so he is forced to find another way to obtain the basic

5. von Rad, 106.

necessities of life; and second, he is consigned to wander the earth as a fugitive.

Cain protests. It is more than he can bear. Cain is well aware of the fact that his punishment is a sentence of death; he faces being fair game for anyone who would choose to make sport of him. Thus, he is left with only one option—to beg for mercy. He can do nothing else.

Cain's situation, of course, is our situation. One-on-one murder may not be in our catalog of sins committed, but other types of murder and other acts of rebellion are. We stand in Cain's shoes, guilty and under sentence of death.

GRACE (4:15–16)

In the last two verses, 15 and 16, we reach the climax of the story. Surprise! God graces Cain with his love. There is nothing sentimental or sloppy about this. Cain is marked by God, a mark of life and protection. Cain will never rid himself of the consequences of his sin. He will live with those forever. He will also have to learn another way to make a living. But his life has been spared. He will live.

The story of Cain and Abel is a story about human relationships and a story about the divine-human relationship. We do not live to ourselves. We live with one another, and we live with God. In all of our relationships, God is involved directly, immediately, and finally. That means that when we look upon a creature of God in whom the breath of God resides, to do harm to that person is to attack God himself. Race, nationality, creed, condition of life—none of these sets aside or lessens that truth.

TODAY'S STORY

Frank was furious. He threw the boxes onto the back of the truck with such force that one box nearly hit the man stacking them in the front. "Hey, watch it!" the man snapped. "You wanna kill somebody?"

"Sorry," Frank mumbled. But he didn't feel sorry; he just felt angry. "It's not fair," he thought. "I've been working here for three years and *I* deserve the promotion, not Buddy. Heck, Buddy's only been here six months. What does *he* know about our shipping department? The boss is a jerk for promoting

him. I'm not going to stand for it! I'll find a way to get that job."

The thought comforted him; and as he continued loading the truck, he began to plan his course of action.

For the next few weeks, Frank carefully planted rumors about Buddy. He didn't make direct accusations; instead, he counted on the imaginations of his co-workers to fill in the gaps. In no time Frank began to hear his own rumors reported as statements of fact, and with greater exaggeration than he had hoped for. His co-workers started to complain to each other about having to work for such a person as Buddy. Frank was pleased. It was working.

One day the boss called Frank into his office. "This is it," thought Frank with grim satisfaction. "Now I get the job I deserve."

When Frank arrived at the boss's office, he was startled to see Buddy there too. Uneasily he took a seat, acknowledging Buddy's greeting with a curt nod.

His boss came to the point quickly. "Frank, it has come to my attention that you have been spreading rumors about Buddy." He held up his hand to stop Frank's quick denials. "It took a while to learn that you were the one. You were really quite clever about it. But we did find out, and I have decided to fire you." He paused to let the words sink in. "However, Buddy convinced me to give you another chance. He says you are the best worker he has. I expect you to prove that."

"Thank you," Frank whispered. He felt exhausted. In five short minutes he had gone from satisfaction through anxiety, fear, and panic, to relief. He looked at Buddy. What kind of person was he to stand up for someone who had tried to hurt him?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In what ways is this story similar to the story of Cain and Abel?
2. How was Frank attempting to "kill" Buddy?
3. What are other examples of this kind of killing?
4. Have you experienced the kind of gracious second chance that Frank was given?

THREE

NOAH
SAVING RAIN

GENESIS 6:5—9:17, portions thereof

6:5 The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. [6]And the LORD was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. [7]So the LORD said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the ground, man and beast and creeping things and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them." [8]But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD. . . . [13]And God said to Noah, "I have determined to make an end of all flesh; for the earth is filled with violence through them; behold, I will destroy them with the earth. [14]Make yourself an ark of gopher wood. . . . [17]For behold, I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life from under heaven; everything that is on the earth shall die. [18]But I will establish my covenant with you; and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you. [19]And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every sort into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female. [20]Of the birds according to their kinds, and of the animals according to their kinds, of every creeping thing of the ground according to its kind, two of every sort shall come in to you, to keep them alive. [21]Also take with you every sort of food that is eaten, and store it up; and it shall serve as food for you and for them." [22]Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him.

7:1 Then the LORD said to Noah, "Go into the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that you are righteous before me in this generation. [2]Take with you seven pairs of all clean animals, the male and his mate; and a pair of the animals that are not clean, the male and his mate; [3]and seven pairs of the birds of the air also, male and female, to keep their kind alive upon the face of all the earth. [4]For in seven days I will send rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living thing that I have made I will blot out from the face of the ground." [5]And Noah did all that the LORD had commanded him. . . .

11 In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened. [12]And rain fell upon the earth forty days and forty nights. [13]On the very same day Noah and his sons, Shem and Ham and Jāpheth, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons

with them entered the ark, [14]they
and every beast according to its
kind, and all the cattle according to
their kinds, and every creeping
thing that creeps on the earth
according to its kind, and every
bird according to its kind, every
bird of every sort. [15]They went into
the ark with Noah, two and two of
all flesh in which there was the
breath of life. [16]And they that en-
tered, male and female of all flesh,
went in as God had commanded
him; and the LORD shut him in.

17 The flood continued forty
days upon the earth; and the
waters increased, and bore up the
ark, and it rose high above the
earth. . . . [21]And all flesh died that
moved upon the earth, birds, cat-
tle, beasts, all swarming creatures
that swarm upon the earth, and
every man; [22]everything on the dry
land in whose nostrils was the
breath of life died. . . .

8:1 But God remembered Noah
and all the beasts and all the cattle
that were with him in the ark. And
God made a wind blow over the
earth, and the waters subsided;
[2]the fountains of the deep and the
windows of the heavens were
closed, the rain from the heavens
was restrained, [3]and the waters
receded from the earth contin-
ually. At the end of a hundred and
fifty days the waters had abated;
[4]and in the seventh month, on the
seventeenth day of the month, the
ark came to rest upon the moun-
tains of Ar'ărat. . . .

13 In the six hundred and first
year, in the first month, the first
day of the month, the waters were
dried from off the earth; and
Noah removed the covering of the
ark, and looked, and behold, the
face of the ground was dry. . . .
[18]So Noah went forth, and his sons
and his wife and his sons' wives
with him. [19]And every beast, every
creeping thing, and every bird,
everything that moves upon the
earth, went forth by families out
of the ark.

20 Then Noah built an altar to
the LORD, and took of every clean
animal and of every clean bird,
and offered burnt offerings on the
altar. [21]And when the LORD
smelled the pleasing odor, the
LORD said in his heart, "I will
never again curse the ground
because of man, for the imagina-
tion of man's heart is evil from his
youth; neither will I ever again
destroy every living creature as I
have done. [22]While the earth
remains, seedtime and harvest,
cold and heat, summer and winter,
day and night, shall not cease."

9:1 And God blessed Noah and his
sons, and said to them, "Be fruit-
ful and multiply, and fill the
earth. . . .

8 Then God said to Noah and to
his sons with him, [9]"Behold, I
establish my covenant with you
and your descendants after you,
[10]and with every living creature
that is with you, the birds, the cat-
tle, and every beast of the earth
with you, as many as came out of
the ark. [11]I establish my covenant
with you, that never again shall all
flesh be cut off by the waters of a
flood, and never again shall there
be a flood to destroy the earth."
[12]And God said, "This is the sign
of the covenant which I make
between me and you and every liv-
ing creature that is with you, for
all future generations: [13]I set my
bow in the cloud, and it shall be a
sign of the covenant between me
and the earth. [14]When I bring
clouds over the earth and the bow
is seen in the clouds, [15]I will
remember my covenant which is
between me and you and every liv-
ing creature of all flesh; and the
waters shall never again become a
flood to destroy all flesh. [16]When
the bow is in the clouds, I will look

upon it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth." [17]God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth."

In ancient Mesopotamia there were a number of flood stories written between 2500 B.C. and 1500 B.C. The stories that come from this part of the world have numerous similarities. They usually tell about an important man who receives a flood warning from one of the gods. Additionally, the stories describe a ship which is to provide refuge for the man (hero), his family, and various animals. Often the Mesopotamian stories tell how a raven and a dove are sent out of the ship to search for dry land; and the hero of the story, upon completion of the ordeal, sacrifices to the gods. Following the sacrifices, the hero and the gods come to some sort of mutual agreement or understanding, and usually the hero is granted immortality.

One of the oldest of the Mesopotamian flood stories comes from Sumerian literature. It tells about a man named Ziusudra who was warned in a dream by the god Enki that a deluge was coming. Enki also instructed Ziusudra how to build a ship. Following a furious storm that lasted seven days, Ziusudra offered a sacrifice of thanks to the sun god and was rewarded with the gift of immortality by the gods.

Another tale comes out of Babylonia. This is the story found in the Gilgamesh Epic. In this story, the hero is named Uta-napishtim. Once upon a time, the story goes, the gods decided to wipe out the human race with a flood because humans were too noisy. Uta-napishtim was warned in a dream by a god named Ea that there was to be a flood. He was told to build a ship large enough to carry himself, his family, and a variety of animals to safety. Shortly thereafter, the rains came; the storm raged for six days. At the end of that time, the ship came to rest on top of Mount Nisir. Uta-napishtim sent out a dove, a swallow, and a raven to find dry land. Finally, he offered sweet-smelling sacrifices to the gods on Mount Nisir. The gods were grateful and responded by granting immortality to both Uta-napishtim and his wife, Ishtar, who made herself a necklace as a symbol by which to remember the event.

THE BIBLE AND ANCIENT FLOOD STORIES

The story about Uta-napishtim is much older than our story in the Bible, and there are many similarities. But what are the

differences? The differences are striking and show the unique point of view of the Hebrews.

Uta-napishtim is a king; Noah in the biblical story is not. The Babylonian story has as the motive for the flood the anger of the gods at the noise made by humans. In the biblical story, the situation is much more serious; God takes offense at human wickedness.

While it may seem unbelievable that Noah was 600 years old at the time of the flood, Uta-napishtim was 64,000 years old! In the Babylonian story, the hero captains a ship—which means he can steer; he has some control over his fate. The biblical story tells us of an ark, which is like a huge tub which cannot be steered. Thus, Noah must put himself totally in the hands of God. At the conclusion of the Babylonian story, the gods come running because they have had no sacrifices and are hungry. At this point, the hero is the master and is accepted by the gods as their equal—he lives forever. Noah, on the other hand, offers his sacrifices as praise to God. He remains a mortal man and refounds the human race.

The fact that the biblical writers used other ancient stories in fashioning their own story is of less interest than what they did with those other tales. Their purpose in writing was quite different. They had something to say which they thought was important to human life. Thus, they did not describe immortal heroes, for they did not wish to glorify human beings. Their purpose was to say something about God and God's relationship to the creation.

In keeping with the theme presented in the stories of Adam and Eve and Cain and Abel, the story of Noah also has to do with human rebellion and the consequences of that rebellion. But now this rebellion does not involve just one or two people, it involves everybody. And this rebellion against God's purpose for creation is so serious that God decides consciously and coldly to undo what has been done. God decides literally to take apart the entire created order. God would, by the wrath of divine judgment, return the whole of his handiwork to its beginnings in watery chaos.

Yet God does not carry out this plan, at least not completely. God allows Noah and his family to be spared and thus opens the door for at least one more attempt to make the world what it was originally intended to be. The biblical story concludes with God's making a solemn agreement (covenant) never again to devastate the earth by flood. As in the stories of Adam and Eve and Cain and Abel, God's love and mercy are the final word.

TWO STORIES IN ONE

If we look carefully at the biblical flood story, we find that two separate stories have been combined by someone serving as an editor. Although some elements of the two stories have been harmonized, other elements stand alone to leave the reader a bit confused.

For example, in Genesis 7:2–3 Noah is instructed to take seven pairs of clean animals and one pair of unclean animals into the ark. In 6:19–20 and 7:13–16a, however, we read of God's telling Noah to take simply a male-female pair of all animals into the ark. There are other differences, too. One of the stories notes that following the flood God promised never to curse the ground again; the wickedness of human beings would have no effect upon the regular seasons of the year (8:21–22). The other story concludes with God's making an everlasting covenant never again to destroy the earth by flood (9:11).

While inconsistencies such as these are evidence that two stories have been combined, it is not important to concentrate on their differences. Consider instead the story as a whole and the meaning it has.

HUMAN EVIL AND GOD'S RESPONSE (6:5—7:23)

The first part of the story covers Genesis 6:5 through 7:12 and deals with the problem of human evil and God's responses to that problem.

The story of Noah opens by recognizing that things were not going the way God had intended for creation. There was something fundamentally wrong with the human race. Wickedness had consumed the people; evil had become the rule rather than the exception. It was a sorry state of affairs; humans everywhere were living in open rebellion against their Creator.

Reading the first few verses of this story, we are confronted with an extremely interesting portrayal of God. God is not a deity far removed who does not care. We have the picture of a God intimately involved with the creation. This is a God who cares deeply, and the depth of God's caring is expressed in the suffering God experiences as the result of human disobedience. "The Lord was sorry that he had made man . . . and it grieved him to his heart" (6:6).

Nonetheless, God remains a God of judgment and righteousness, and the consequence of human rebellion remains the

same—death. "I will blot out man," and not only man, but "man and beast and creeping things and birds of the air" (6:7). Why the animals and the birds (but not sea creatures) should also suffer is unstated, but perhaps the significance can be found in the view that all of creation is interrelated; what affects one part of creation affects all its parts. At any rate, "the earth was corrupt . . . filled with violence" (6:11) and God "determined to make an end of all flesh" (6:13). God planned a flood so powerful that every living thing would be wiped away.

It is interesting to note that Noah is introduced into the story suddenly and without warning. We know nothing of him except that he "found favor in the eyes of the Lord" (6:8) and "was a righteous man" (6:9). Evidently, Noah had succeeded where Adam and Eve and Cain had failed.

Indeed, it was because of his righteousness that Noah is chosen to be spared from the destruction to come. Of more importance, however, he is to be the starting point of the new creation. God instructs him to build an ark, and the instructions are explicit. Then God establishes a new covenant with Noah. There is to be terrible destruction, but also there is to be a new possibility. Noah, still faithful, follows God's commands.

The rains come. The flood did as God intended: "all flesh died. . . . Only Noah was left, and those that were with him in the ark" (7:21–23).

NEW BEGINNING (8:1—9:17)

The flood, of course, is not the end. The rest of the story (especially Genesis 8:20 through 9:17) is highly important because here we have described a new beginning based upon the grace and the promises of God. With the receding of the flood waters, God makes a new covenant with humankind. God will no longer curse the ground, nor will God ever again destroy the earth. Beyond that, God guarantees that the creation will function in perpetuity as intended. That means that the rains will fall and the sun will shine and the seasons of the year will roll around on schedule. In contrast to Canaanite and Mesopotamian theology, human beings do not need to appease the gods to ensure fertility. Fertility is part of the creation; it has been taken care of.

What is especially fascinating as we come to the conclusion of the story is that God recognizes that the flood did not solve the problem of human wickedness. Floods are not the answer.

The answer lies in the heart of God. Now we have the picture of a suffering God who responds in pure grace to human beings in their wickedness. No matter that human beings deserve to die. Even after the flood "the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth" (8:21). Nevertheless, God resolves to ensure that humans will live.

So God blesses Noah and his sons and renews the command to "be fruitful and multiply." We have returned to the beginning. God has brought order out of watery chaos; God has brought Noah and family to life and now gives them responsibility for caring for the creation. Noah and his family are given freedom, but it is limited freedom. And the limits placed upon them relate to human worth and dignity. Life is to be considered sacred, for it is created in the image of God. And humans are to live in harmonious relationships; they are to care for one another and they remain responsible for one another.

It is a new situation, on this side of the flood. And it is sealed by a covenant which God declares all by himself. It is an unconditional covenant. There is nothing here of "you do this for me and I'll do that for you." God does it all; nothing is required of Noah. It is the solemn promise that never again shall life be destroyed by flood. It is a promise "signed" by the rainbow, by which God shall remember his covenant.

Evil has not been eradicated; indeed, evil is expected. But evil is due to human sinfulness and is not from God. God will remain faithful; God will remember his covenant. The creation shall be ongoing.

TODAY'S STORY

"The end is near!" thundered the voice from the television. "Look around you! Look at the signs: war, disease, hunger." The camera closed in on dark blazing eyes and a pointing finger. "Sinners, change your ways! God has said, 'Enough of this. I will bring this wicked world to an end.' *Now* is the time to repent and be saved. *Now*, before it is too late."

The voice dropped to a whisper. "One push of a button and we're all gone. It is God's punishment, just as God caused a terrible disease to spread among some of the wicked in our country, the wicked sinners who . . ."

Maria flicked off the television in disgust. "It's the old the-end-is-near-repent-and-be-saved routine. You can hear it every Saturday night on late-night cable stations. Who believes that

garbage about God destroying the world and using illness as punishment, anyway?"

"An amazingly large number of people," Tony responded. "There's a guy at work who is always saying that people get sick because they did something sinful. I try to talk to him about the way I understand God's working in our lives, but he just won't listen. Do you remember that terrible space shuttle explosion that killed six astronauts and a school teacher? Well, this guy said it was God's punishment for our going into space. He said that God intends for us to stay right here on earth. He also talks a lot about a nuclear holocaust. He believes God is going to use the 'wicked' Russians to destroy the 'sinful' United States—and soon. He says it's all written down in Ezekiel."

Maria sighed. "I guess there are a lot of people who believe God is that angry and vindictive. But I don't see how. I mean, how could anyone believe that God gave cancer to your wonderful, loving, creative mother because of something she did? Granted, the world is a pretty sinful place. But I don't think God is going to destroy it. We just might do it ourselves!"

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What experiences have you had with people who blamed misfortunes on God's punishment for sin? Did you agree or disagree?
2. Some people see the threat of a nuclear war as an indication that God may destroy the world, this time by fire, in a way that parallels the flood of Noah. Others say that any such war would be by human action, not God's, and that the story of Noah is a completely different matter because in it God is the one who acts. Do you see similarities between the Noah flood and the threat of nuclear war, or are they different issues?
3. Do you see the world as undependable, on the verge of chaos and destruction? Or do you see the world as a safe, stable place to live? If you see dangers, who is the cause—God or humans?

FOUR

THE TOWER OF BABEL
STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN

GENESIS 11:1–9

11:1 Now the whole earth had one language and few words. [2]And as men migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shīnar and settled there. [3]And they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly." And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. [4]Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." [5]And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the sons of men had built. [6]And the LORD said, "Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; and nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. [7]Come, let us go down, and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." [8]So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. [9]Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.

Have you ever been with a group of people when a young child entered the room and began to show off in order to gather attention? (Or was it an adult who tried to steal the show?)

This kind of behavior is typical in human life. On the part of most of us, there seems to be a deep need to be important, to have significance, to be noticed, to invest our lives with some meaning which would place us above or ahead of other people. Just to live is simply not enough. We struggle to become famous (or infamous), rich, powerful. We want to be respected and, in some cases, feared.

What is true for individuals is also true of groups. This striving for importance, for significance, is a motivating factor within all sorts of political and social groups, from the smallest to the largest. Individuals and nations throughout the world are caught up in this desire for power and prestige. Thus we compete with one another in order to gain the upper hand, to gain

control, to have our way. Walk through the world and you will see much show-off behavior.

The Tower of Babel was a show-off. Its story is about human self-promotion. It has to do with the tendency to "puff oneself up."

But it is more than that. It also has to do with the desire to make one's life secure and the attempt to nail down that security. The people we read about in Genesis 11:1–9 wanted to secure their lives; they wanted to protect themselves; they wanted to ensure that they were safe from outside interference which might disrupt their routine. They believed that their security could be guaranteed by their unity, and the decision to build a city and a tower was a community decision, not the whim of one or two leaders. They were not unlike many small towns which close ranks against strangers and outsiders. They sensed that if they should be scattered about the earth, they would lose that oneness which gave them strength.

At first these people shared a common language which was essential for unity because it allowed easy communication. They also shared a common land, the land of Shinar. This common language and common turf were the cementing factors which held their community together and thus provided them with whatever sense of security they had.

They feared losing this language and land. Sensing threats to their safety, they concluded that they could ensure their security and the future of their community by making a name for themselves by constructing a city and a tower. These, they believed, would be so impressive that they would increase the relative importance of their community. They would strengthen the bonds which held the people together and decrease any inclinations to seek a home elsewhere. Their motto might well have been, "United we stand, divided we fall."

The people in our story were afraid. They feared being scattered. Perhaps they felt that the larger world, being largely unknown to them, contained various terrors which could be harmful. To a certain extent this is not an unreasonable fear. As we well know, there are many things to fear in the world. That fact is verified every day in our newspapers. But does fear sometimes lead us into foolish, even dangerous behavior? It did the people of our story.

An even deeper problem, however, for the folks in the land of Shinar was that they began to lose sight of their creatureliness. Or, to put it another way, they forgot their place in the scheme of things. They began to trust in their own abilities. They

neglected to trust their Creator. There was more here than the simple fact that a tower was being built; it was the meaning of the tower. The tower represented an attempt by humans to scale the walls of heaven. Indeed, if God were to let this tower building proceed as planned, the humans involved might well become so "puffed up" with their own importance, that they could conclude they were equal with God. At the least, they would believe they could live their lives without reference to God.

THE TOWER OF BABYLON

It is likely that the intended setting to this story was Babylon (called the "Land of Shinar" and "Babel" in the story). Babylon was an ancient city with a tower.

Imagine yourself on a journey to that ancient city. Pretend that you are approaching the city from the northwest, coming down the Euphrates River in what is now the country of Iraq. As you approach the city, you see the river banks covered with palm trees. Here and there are irrigation canals taking river water into the countryside to allow rich farming.

Arriving at Babylon you first see to your left a fortress to help protect the city from any possible attackers. Notice the moat and three walls surrounding the city. Two of the walls are over 21 feet thick; they are made of baked and sun-dried brick. Along the innermost wall are protecting towers.

Along the river you notice bulwarks of masonry to strengthen the banks, and at intervals there are steps coming down to the river where landing platforms are available for boat travelers and shippers.

But you leave your boat just north of the city so that you can enter along the city's main street, the Processional Street, which is used during the New Year Festival when the images of the gods are carried through the city. You enter through the Ishtar gate, whose walls are decorated with the figures of 120 lions, symbols of the goddess Ishtar. After passing through the long gate, you find on your right the king's summer palace, including the famous "hanging gardens" planted at different levels to remind queen Anyitis of her mountain homeland.

On the other side of the street across from the palace is a temple to the goddess Ninmah; but you will not stop at either the palace or this temple. You go instead about half a mile further south into the city, toward its tallest structure. It is in a temple complex known as the Esagila, said to be the dwelling

place of the city-god Marduk. Here we pass temples, chapels, and courtyards, with the main shrine housing a great sitting figure of Marduk all of gold on a golden throne.

Finally you stand before a great tower known as a ziggurat. The tower is named Etemenanki, which translates "the house that is the foundation of heaven and earth." Having seen it so long from a distance, you are now at its base, which is 300 feet square: it also reaches a height of 300 feet. This is not a straight-up-and-down tower; it has levels, like huge steps, so that the highest part in the center is much narrower than the outside base. Going up to the top is a long stairway-like ramp, which ends at a shrine atop the uppermost stage.

You are now at the tower of Babylon, or as the Hebrews said the word, *Babel.* It is at least probable that this ziggurat in Babylon is the tower that relates to the story in Genesis. The Today's English Version of the Bible even translates the "land of Shinar" (11:2, RSV) as "Babylonia."

The land of Babylonia was the home of several ziggurats such as the one that could be seen in Babylon itself. These ziggurats often had seven terraces, representative of the seven planetary gods which served as mediators between heaven and earth. The summit of the ziggurat was thought to be the entrance to heaven. It has been said that the ziggurat was like the "naval of the earth," or an umbilical cord which linked the human with the divine.

Given the nature and purpose of ziggurats in ancient Mesopotamia, it is likely that the tower in our story represented the attempt to co-opt the place of God, to force one's way into the heavens. The tower was another attempt to break the distinction between the divine and the human. It was to fail to recognize the truth that one's security is intimately and ultimately dependent only upon God, the Lord of all creation.

GOD'S RESPONSE

Many biblical commentators point out the delicious irony in God's reaction to the great tower plan. "The Lord came down to see the city and the tower," we are told (11:5). These poor, deluded humans could never hope to build a tower tall enough to reach God, so God had to come down, taking leave of the heavenly abode in order to see what was going on. While this story is doubtless a direct slap at pagan religion in its attempt to find and manipulate the gods, it also says something significant about all human attempts to define God. The Babylonians

could not reach God with their ziggurats nor can any human action locate or control the Lord. What we know of God is the result of gracious revelation (God coming to us), not the result of our piercing the heavenly sanctuary and making ourselves God's equals.

When God comes down and sees what is happening on the plain of Shinar, God becomes concerned about these creatures' overstepping the bounds placed on them. Where could such a terrible turn of events lead?

It led to the people's undoing. They found to their dismay that their frantic construction efforts were to no avail. There was no security in themselves or the work of their hands. God scattered them anyway—just what they had hoped to avoid! Now they were spread "over the face of all the earth" (11:8). Not only that, but God "confused" their common language and suddenly they were unable to understand one another (11:9).

To lose the ability to communicate means to lose the possibility for relationship. In a sense, the conclusion to the story of the Tower of Babel is similar to Adam and Eve's being tossed from the garden or Cain's condemnation to wander the earth; it represents a judgement which the people brought upon themselves because of a broken relationship with God. Furthermore, the loss of the ability to communicate represents the breaking down of interhuman relationships. Once again, in this story of the Tower of Babel, we are given a graphic description as to how we are tied to God and to one another.

TODAY'S STORY

"It's *beautiful!*"

"Such a simple design, yet so attractive."

"Plenty of room to grow."

The church council at St. Timothy's was getting its first look at the completed educational wing. Sunday would be the first time the addition would be used, and tonight the council was initiating the brand new conference room. Everyone was excited and impressed.

One of the council members leaned over to the pastor and whispered conspiratorially, "The other churches around here are sure going to be envious, aren't they? Yep, St. Tim's is making a mark with this beautiful addition. They'll know we're a church to contend with."

The pastor looked at the council member in surprise, then frowned. "We built the educational wing because it was needed, not as a showcase," she said quietly.

"Oh, I know, I know," he replied quickly, "But, well, I don't think the other churches appreciate us. I mean, they think we're small and unimportant and . . ." He decided to take a different approach. "One of the great things with this addition is that we can shut off the heat here and lock it up during the week and still keep the church offices heated and open. We won't have to worry about strangers wandering around or running up the fuel bill with no one here. It shouldn't cost us much at all to . . ." His voice trailed off as he looked at the pastor. She was not smiling.

"I have a proposal I will be bringing to council after we finish this tour," she told him. "It has to do with the use of the building." She said nothing further.

Later, during the meeting, the pastor presented her propsal. "I would like to propose that we open a day-care center here as soon as possible. The closest one is ten miles away, and we need one in this community."

"But do we have enough members who need a center to make it worthwhile?" one council member asked.

"I doubt that we do," the pastor replied. "I wasn't thinking of our congregation's members only. It would be a community center, for anyone who needs day-care services."

"But what about our new furniture and carpeting?" another council member asked. "A bunch of kids will ruin it."

"We will have children here on Sunday mornings," the pastor said pointedly. She looked around the table at each person. "We are here in this place to serve. Part of our mission is outreach and witness. What better place to start than with the offer of our lovely new building?"

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How is this story like the story of the Tower of Babel?
2. What do we really see as the purpose of our "religious buildings"?
3. What are some of the ways we try to "build monuments" in stone or otherwise to make ourselves important and secure? (Examples might be "keeping up with the Joneses" or looking to our children to fulfill all the dreams we never fulfilled for ourselves.)

FIVE

ABRAHAM, SARAH, AND ISAAC
The Birth Of A Nation

GENESIS 12:1—25:11, portions thereof

12:1 Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. [2]And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. [3]I will bless those who bless you, and him who curses you I will curse; and by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves."

4 So Abram went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Hārān. [5]And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions which they had gathered, and the persons that they had gotten in Haran; and they set forth to go to the land of Canaan. When they had come to the land of Canaan, [6]Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. [7]Then the LORD appeared to Abram, and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." So he built there an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. . . .

10 Now there was a famine in the land. So Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land. [11]When he was about to enter Egypt, he said to Sarai his wife, "I know that you are a woman beautiful to behold; [12]and when the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife'; then they will kill me, but they will let you live. [13]Say you are my sister, that it may go well with me because of you, and that my life may be spared on your account." . . . [15]And when the princes of Pharaoh saw her they praised her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. . . .

17 But the LORD afflicted Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife. [18]So Pharaoh called Abram, and said, "What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me she was your wife?" . . .

13:1 So Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the Negeb. . . .

14 The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, "Lift up your eyes, and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward; [15]for all the land which you see I will give to you and to your descendants for ever. [16]I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if one can count the dust of the earth, your descendants also can be counted. [17]Arise, walk through the length and the breadth of the land, for I will give it to you." [18]So

Abram moved his tent, and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, which are at Hēbrȯn; and there he built an altar to the LORD. . . .

15:1 After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." [2]But Abram said, "O Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" [3]And Abram said, "Behold, thou has given me no offspring; and a slave born in my house will be my heir." [4]And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, "This man shall not be your heir; your own son shall be your heir." [5]And he brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him "So shall your descendants be." [6]And he believed the LORD; and he reckoned it to him as righteousness. . . .

16:1 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, bore him no children. She had an Egyptian maid whose name was Hāgar; [2]and Sarai said to Abram, "Behold now, the LORD has prevented me from bearing children; go in to my maid; it may be that I shall obtain children by her." And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai. [3]So, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Cānaȧn, Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her maid, and gave her to Abram her husband as a wife. [4]And he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. . . .

17:1 When Abram was ninety-nine years old the LORD appeared to Abram, and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. [2]And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly." [3]Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, [4]"Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. [5]No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. . . ."

15 And God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. [16]I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her; I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples shall come from her." [17]Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said to himself, "Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?" [18]And Abraham said to God, "O that Ishmael might live in thy sight!" [19]God said, "No, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him. . . ."

21:1 The LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did to Sarah as he had promised. [2]And Sarah conceived, and bore Abraham a son in his old age at the time of which God had spoken to him. [3]Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore him, Isaac. [4]And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. [5]Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. [6]And Sarah said, "God has made laughter for me; every one who hears will laugh over me." [7]And she said, "Who would have said to

Abraham that Sarah would suckle children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age." . . .

22:1 After these things God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here am I." [2]He said, "Take you son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering upon one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." [3]So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac; and he cut the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. [4]On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place afar off. [5]Then Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the ass; I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you." [6]And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So they went both of them together. [7]And Isaac said to his father Abraham, "My father!" And he said, "Here am I, my son." He said, "Behold, the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" [8]Abraham said, "God will provide himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." So they went both of them together.

9 When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. [10]Then Abraham put forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. [11]But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven, and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here am I." [12]He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me." [13]And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. . . .

25:7 These are the days of the years of Abraham's life, a hundred and seventy-five years. [8]Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people. [9]Isaac and Ishmael his sons buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, east of Mamre, [10]the field which Abraham purchased from the Hittites. There Abraham was buried, with Sarah his wife. [11]After the death of Abraham God blessed Isaac his son. And Isaac dwelt at Beerlahairoi.

Chapters 12 through 25 of Genesis outline the story of Abraham, his wife Sarah, and their son Isaac. Abraham is considered by Jews and Christians alike the patriarch of Israel. He is the father of the Jewish people, the source of the Jewish faith, the progenitor of the Jewish nation. Sarah is "a mother of nations; kings of peoples shall come from her" (17:16). In one sense, the Abrahamic stories are the traditions from which Israel traces its roots. And they go way back to the nomadic

stages of the Aramean tribes. Thus, the story of Abraham is the story of the birth of a nation.

But the story of Abraham is much more. It is a story of promise, a story of faith mixed with doubt and indecision, a story of God's faithfulness.

Abraham is described in Genesis as neither a perfect man nor the worst of persons. He is simply a human being called by God to participate in a series of earth-shaking events of which he was, at best, only dimly aware. Why this particular nomad was selected to carry out God's purposes is a question that is never asked. Abraham is simply an agent of God, chosen to achieve God's purposes in the world. The concern of the writers and editors of Genesis is how Abraham responded to God's call and how, in turn, God related to Abraham. The story of Abraham, then, is a story about the interrelationship between God and God's people.

Before looking at the stories of Abraham, it may be helpful to realize that Genesis 12—25 is a collection of material. Various writers were involved in bringing the material to its present stage of development. Some of the stories have been borrowed from other peoples; they do not all originate with Israel. Furthermore, down through the years a number of editors had a hand in modifying these stories.

These chapters, therefore, contain ancient traditions which have been woven together for the purpose of clarifying Israel's theological foundations. What are those foundations? In Genesis 15:6 we have an example St. Paul pointed to in Romans 4:3 of what we call justification by faith; Abraham "believed the Lord." In various places such as Genesis 17:4, there is the notion of "covenant," a solemn agreement between God and the creation, in this case, Abraham and his descendants. God promises to bless Israel.

Our study of Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac will focus on the themes of promise, faith, and faithfulness.

THE PROMISE OF GOD

The story of Abraham is a story of promise because God's promise serves as the cornerstone of any understanding of what Abraham is and what Abraham does. The story of Abraham does not make sense without the promise. Beginning with the call for Abraham to leave family and friends, God's promise is made and stated again and again as Abraham is in a variety of social, political, and personal entanglements.

At the beginning of the story, Genesis 12:1–2, Abraham receives a command from God, but it is a command coupled with a promise:

> "Go from your country. . . . And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you. . . ."

No doubt hundreds of years later, Israelites wondered how they had achieved such great wealth and power under David and Solomon. Here was the answer: God had promised success to their ancestor, Abraham. But, there was a "purpose for all this generosity: '*so that* you might be a blessing.'"[6]

Abraham did as God commanded, and in doing so he set into motion the process by which God would reveal himself not only to his "chosen" people, Israel, but also through Israel to the entire world. It is interesting to consider that the promise of God is a gift; it comes from God's sovereign love. It was not given because Abraham was deserving, but because God saw fit to do so.

Whatever Abraham made of the promise, he obeyed the command. Leaving Haran with his family, he set out on what was to become a lifelong journey of faith. When he arrives in the land of Canaan, Abraham is the recipient of another promise, the promise of land (12:7). Abraham is also promised innumerable descendants, "as the dust of the earth" (13:16). This promise involving descendants is given again in chapter 15, where two stories are combined to emphasize the dual promise of land and descendants.

At age 99, however, Abraham had still not sired a son. When the promise of descendants is made again, Abraham can only fall on his face and laugh (17:17). The thought of his and Sarah's having a child struck him as purely ridiculous; after all, Sarah was only ten years younger than he. God, however, ignores Abraham's disbelief and restates and extends the promise. Now God says that not only will Sarah bear a son, but his name shall be Isaac. The promise to Abraham now becomes the promise to Isaac also (17:19).

When Abraham reaches his hundredth year, the promise takes flesh. Isaac is born. Here is the heir to the promise and the father of nations. Before that can happen, however, Abraham is put to the test. According to the will of God, Isaac is to

6. McCurley, 35.

be sacrificed, which makes no sense to Abraham. But trusting God, he sets out to do what God requires (22:1–13). What he discovers is that it was only a test; God does not require the sacrifice after all. Abraham discovers that God's promise holds fast. Not only will he be blessed and his descendants multiply, but all of the nations of the world will be blessed through Abraham. It is an incredible promise, a promise with a purpose: "*so that* you might be a blessing."

THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM

The story of Abraham is also a story of faith. Abraham has often been used as an example of what it means to live by faith; Hebrews 11:8–12 is one instance. At the same time, we do not want to romanticize or idealize Abraham's faith. The biblical record is quite clear in its portrayal of Abraham as being very much a human being; his faith, when tested in human experience, was often found wanting.

In these stories from Genesis, faith is defined essentially as a matter of trust and obedience. And to the extent that Abraham trusted and obeyed God, he was a man of faith. There are a number of examples of such trust and obedience. When Abraham was commanded by God to leave home and family for a

new land, he obeyed. When given the promise of a child, initially, at least, he believed and trusted that it would happen. Although called to the frightful reality of living and working among a pagan people and foreign culture, he persevered in his trust that God was with him and would provide for him. And when ordered to give up the child who was heir to the promise, Abraham acted in a faithful and trusting manner.

But Abraham's faith does not come easily, and on several occasions we read how his faith goes slip-sliding away. Abraham lied to Pharaoh in order to save his own life: he told Pharaoh that Sarah was his sister when Pharaoh wanted her as a wife (12:11–19). And when Sarah remained barren, Abraham's faith wavered to the point that he tried to stack the deck by having a child, Ishmael, with Hagar, his wife's Egyptian maid (16:1–4). Even when God restated the promise of a son, Abraham laughed and said, "O that Ishmael might live in thy sight!" (17:18).

What Abraham found, just as we do, is that faith is not simply a matter of making a decision at one point in time. Faith is formed over and over again as we are confronted with options for or against what we perceive to be God's will. Faith should not be thought of as a straight line, but as a wavering line, for none of us is always faithful. Our faith is frequently laced with doubt. Even when we desperately want to believe, there are occasions when, like Abraham, we laugh: faith seems absurd. In spite of all that, however, if like Abraham we can remain open to God's leading us, we will learn that God can continue to use us, even as God used Abraham. We will learn, as Abraham learned and as St. Paul stated, that "in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).

THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD

While the story of Abraham is certainly about God's promise and details Abraham's faith, it is primarily a story about the faithfulness of God.

The writers of these stories wanted us to understand just who we are dealing with. The God of the Abrahamic traditions is not some new god whom Abraham adopted in his travels, nor is it some old god of the Canaanites.The God of Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac is the very God who created the heavens and the earth. This is the God who stands over, above, and against the creation and its creatures. This is a God who is capable of

anything and who is full of surprises. This God can be neither manipulated nor controlled. This is a God who sees that the divine will is fulfilled and who, in spite of the faithlessness of Abraham, remains faithful.

When we look carefully at Abraham, we find a man who is very much like human beings of every time and place. He is a person who combines within himself a mixture of faith and doubt, who is able to act responsibly at times and irresponsibly at other times. There were occasions when he sought only his self-interest and when he failed to trust God. He tried to secure his future by having a son by the slave woman. He lied to save his own skin. At various times Abraham gave God good reason to take back the promise, to try again with someone else.

Yet God remained faithful! The story of Abraham boils down to a testimony of God's freely given grace. Abraham's only hope is in God—he cannot secure his own life. All he can do is leave his life in the hands of God. And time and again in these stories we find that God comes through. God remains faithful to his word, the promise given to Abraham.

In the Abrahamic stories there is a powerful message for Christians today. We live in a world which is basically faithless, which in many respects has no use for God and believes God is an outworn or dated concept. We live in a world which puts its trust in either guns or butter. It is a world kneeling under the threat of a nuclear holocaust.

Not surprisingly, even Christians are tempted to believe that the so-called promises of God are just religious mumbo jumbo. That is the point at which we need once again to hear the message contained in the story of Abraham. Here is our ancestor, the father of our faith, who, in spite of himself, found that God was indeed faithful, and that his only hope lay in living in relationship with God. The story of Abraham is the beginning of a history of faithfulness, which culminates for us in the cross and resurrection of Jesus. The cross is the most powerful demonstration that God is indeed faithful to the fullest possible extent.

TODAY'S STORY

The blindness had come on gradually. At first Rose had noticed a blurring of her vision. Her doctor assured her that the eye drops would help, and they did—for a while. Then the blurring became worse, and Rose went through laser surgery treatments.

"These treatments should take care of the problem," her doctor said; but as time went on he seemed less and less hopeful. After the last surgery, Rose woke up and knew that it had done nothing. She was blind. Permanently.

Rose had been active all her life. She taught fifth grade and loved every minute of it. She played racquetball and tennis regularly to keep in shape.On weekends she volunteered in a nursing home, writing letters for the residents, listening to their stories, reading novels and newspapers to them. She read voraciously in every spare minute: magazines, fiction, technical books, newspapers—anything in print.

Now she was blind. "It's God's will," a woman from her church told her. "God loves you, Rose, and God has a plan for you and your blindness. God wanted you to be blind for a special purpose."

"I doubt it," Rose said, not unkindly. She knew her friend meant well. "Actually, Elizabeth, I think God is just as unhappy about my blindness as I am. I don't think it is God's will that I am blind. But I know, as you said, that God loves me and is right here with me as I go through this. And I've been thinking about my life. I may be blind, but I'm not dead. There's no reason I can't learn braille or still teach. I may not be able to play racquetball or tennis, although maybe I'll even find a way to do that. But there's still so much I *can* do. I can still visit in the nursing home and sing in the choir at church. I am so grateful for all God has given me!"

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does faith mean to Rose? Is it assurance that God means only the best for her? Obedience to God? A willingness to go in new directions in life with confidence? All three? Something more?
2. What are some stories of people you know personally who have exhibited the kind of faith Rose demonstrated?
3. What are examples of the part faith has played in your own life?
4. When have you experienced God's faithfulness and promise?

SIX

JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS
All In The Family

GENESIS 37:2—50:22, portions thereof

37:2 This is the history of the family of Jacob.

Joseph, being seventeen years old, was shepherding the flock with his brothers; he was a lad with the sons of Bılhäh and Zılpäh, his father's wives; and Joseph brought an ill report of them to their father. [3]Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his children, because he was the son of his old age; and he made him a long robe with sleeves. [4]But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him.

5 Now Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers they only hated him the more. [6]He said to them, "Hear this dream which I have dreamed: [7]behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and lo, my sheaf arose and stood upright; and behold, your sheaves gathered round it, and bowed down to my sheaf." [8]His brothers said to him, "Are you indeed to reign over us? Or are you indeed to have dominion over us?" So they hated him yet more for his dreams and for his words. [9]Then he dreamed another dream, and told it to his brothers, and said, "Behold, I have dreamed another dream; and behold, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me." [10]But when he told it to his father and to his brothers, his father rebuked him, and said to him, "What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall I and your mother and your brothers indeed come to bow ourselves to the ground before you?" [11]And his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind.

12 Now his brothers went to pasture their father's flock near Sheçhem. [13]And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers pasturing the flock at Sheçhem? Come, I will send you to them." And he said to him, "Here I am.". . . [17b]So Joseph went after his brothers, and found them at Dothan. [18]They saw him afar off, and before he came near to them they conspired against him to kill him. [19]They said to one another, "Here comes this dreamer. [20]Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits; then we shall say that a wild beast has devoured him, and we shall see what will become of his dreams." [21]But when Reubën heard it, he delivered him out of their hands, saying, "Let us not take his life." [22]And Reubën said to them, "Shed no blood; cast him into this pit here in the wilderness, but lay no hand upon him"—that he might rescue him out of their hand, to restore him to his father. [23]So when Joseph came to

his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the long robe with sleeves that he wore; [24]and they took him and cast him into a pit. The pit was empty, there was not water in it.

25 Then they sat down to eat; and looking up they saw a caravan of Ish'mäēlītes coming from Gil'ēăd, with their camels bearing gum, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry it down to Egypt. [26]Then Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is it if we slay our brother and conceal his blood? [27]Come, let us sell him to the Ish'mäēlītes, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother, our own flesh." And his brothers heeded him. . . .

39:1 Now Joseph was taken down to Egypt, and Pot'i-phär, and officer of Phạraōh, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ish'mäēlītes who had brought him down there. [2]The LORD was with Joseph, and he became a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian, [3]and his master saw that the LORD was with him, and that the LORD caused all that he did to prosper in his hands. . . .

6b Now Joseph was handsome and good-looking. [7]And after a time his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph, and said, "Lie with me." [8]But he refused. . . . [13] And when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and had fled out of the house, [14]she called to the men of her household and said to them, "See, he has brought among us a Hebrew to insult us; he came in to me to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice. . . .

19 When his master heard the words which his wife spoke to him, "This is the way your servant treated me," his anger was kindled. [20]And Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined, and he was there in prison. . . .

41:1 After two whole years, Phạraōh dreamed that he was standing by the Nile, [2]and behold, there came up out of the Nile seven cows sleek and fat, and they fed in the reed grass. [3]And behold, seven other cows, gaunt and thin, came up out of the Nile after them, and stood by the other cows on the bank of the Nile. [4]And the gaunt and thin cows ate up the seven sleek and fat cows. And Phạraōh awoke. . . .

14 Then Phạraōh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon; and when he had shaved himself and changed his clothes, he came in before Phạraōh. . . .

25 Then Joseph said to Phạraōh, "The dream of Phạraōh is one; God has revealed to Phạraōh what he is about to do. . . . [33]Now therefore let Phạraōh select a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt. [34]Let Phạraōh proceed to appoint overseers over the land, and take the fifth part of the produce of the land of Egypt during the seven plenteous years. [35]And let them gather all the food of these good years that are coming, and lay up grain under the authority of Phạraōh for food in the cities, and let them keep it. [36]That food shall be a reserve for the land against the seven years of famine which are to befall the land of Egypt, so that the land may not perish through the famine."

37 This proposal seemed good to Phạraōh and to all his servants. . . . [41]And Phạraōh said to Joseph, "Behold, I have set you over all the land of Egypt.". . .

53 The seven years of plenty that prevailed in the land of Egypt came to an end; [54]and the seven years of famine began to come, as

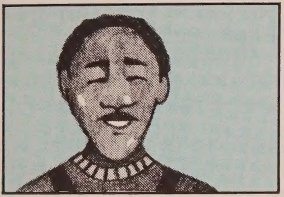
Joseph had said. There was famine in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. [55]When all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Phạraōh for bread; and Phạraōh said to all the Egyptians, "Go to Joseph; what he says to you, do." [56]So when the famine had spread over all the land, Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold to the Egyptians, for the famine was severe in the land of Egypt. [57]Moreover, all the earth came to Egypt to Joseph to buy grain, because the famine was severe over all the earth.

42:1 When Jacob learned that there was grain in Egypt, he said to his sons, "Why do you look at one another?" [2]And he said, "Behold, I have heard that there is grain in Egypt; go down and buy grain for us there, that we may live, and not die." [3]So ten of Joseph's brothers went down to buy grain in Egypt. [4]But Jacob did not send Benjamin, Joseph's brother, with his brothers, for he feared that harm might befall him. [5]Thus the sons of Israel came to buy among the others who came, for the famine was in the land of Cānaȧn.

6 Now Joseph was governor over the land; he it was who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came, and bowed themselves before him with their faces to the ground. [7]Joseph saw his brothers, and knew them, but he treated them like strangers and spoke roughly to them. "Where do you come from?" he said. They said, "From the land of Cānaȧn, to buy food." [8]Thus Joseph knew his brothers, but they did not know him. . . .

45:4 So Joseph said to his brothers, "Come near to me, I pray you." And they came near. And he said, "I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. [5]And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. [6]For the famine has been in the land these two years; and there are yet five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. [7]And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. [8]So it was not you who sent me here, but God; and he as made me a father to Phạraōh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. [9]Make haste and go up to my father and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not tarry; [10]you shall dwell in the land of Gōshėn, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children, and your flocks, your herds, and all that you have; [11]and there I will provide for you, for there are yet five years of famine to come; lest you and your household, and all that you have, come to poverty.' [12]And now your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see, that it is my mouth that speaks to you. [13]You must tell my father of all my splendor in Egypt, and of all that you have seen. Make haste and bring my father down here." [14]Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck. [15]And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them; and after that his brothers talked with him. . . .

25 So they went up out of Egypt, and came to the land of Cānaȧn to their father Jacob. [26]And they told him, "Joseph is still alive, and he is ruler over all the land of Egypt." And his heart fainted, for he did not believe them. [27]But when they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had



said to them, and when he saw the
wagons which Joseph had sent to
carry him, the spirit of their father
Jacob revived; 28and Israel said,
"It is enough; Joseph my son is
still alive; I will go and see him
before I die." . . .

47:1 So Joseph went in and told
Phạraōh, "My father and my
brothers, with their flocks and
herds and all that they possess,
have come from the land of
Cānaàn; they are now in the land
of Gōshėn." . . . 4They said to
Phạraōh, "We have come to
sojourn in the land; for there is no
pasture for your servants' flocks,
for the famine is severe in the land
of Canaan; and now, we pray you,
let your servants dwell in the land
of Goshen." 5Then Phạraōh said
to Joseph, "Your father and your
brothers have come to you. 6The
land of Egypt is before you; settle
your father and your brothers in
the best of the land; let them
dwell in the land of Goshen; and
if you know any able men among
them, put them in charge of my
cattle." . . .

50:22 So Joseph dwelt in Egypt,
he and his father's house; and
Joseph lived a hundred and ten
years.

According to Genesis 37:2, the story that follows in Genesis 37—50 is "the history of the family of Jacob." In one sense that is true enough, but the reader soon becomes aware that these chapters really tell the story of Jacob's favorite son, Joseph.

The major events of the Joseph story are quite familiar to anyone who as attended Sunday church school. This story has been one of the most popular biblical stories, and many people retain vivid childhood memories of parading across a church chancel dressed in a coat of many colors.

Joseph's story has all of the elements of the most compelling novels: family conflict, sex, power, wealth, suffering, reconciliation. It could stand by itself as an intriguing tale about ancient nomads struggling with one another and eking out a living during hard times. Or it could be understood as a transitional story because it ties together the traditions of the patriarchs with the people of Israel in the Exodus event. But that by itself is an insufficient understanding.

On the surface, Genesis 37—50 does not appear to be a particularly religious story. God's role is much more "behind the scenes" than in other biblical material. Joseph sees God's part in the story. When he is reunited with his brothers who had sold him into slavery, Joseph says, "And now do not be distressed,

or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here [Egypt]; for God sent me before you to preserve life" (45:5).

A FAMILY FEUDING

On the one hand, the story of Joseph can be understood as a story of a family in conflict. Because there are few, if any, families which remain free of conflict, that alone would make this an interesting story. We can relate to it for we have experienced conflict in our own families. We also find in studying Genesis 37—50 that this is a story about God's working through the events and experiences of life.

The story begins by describing Jacob's obvious favoritism toward his youngest son, "the son of his old age" (37:3). The symbol of this favoritism was the special coat which Jacob made for Joseph. It was this "long robe with sleeves" (37:3) that came to represent and intensify the sibling rivalry in the family. Because of this special love, Joseph's brothers came to resent and hate him.

But there was more. Joseph was also a tattletale, making unfavorable reports to Jacob about his other sons (37:2). Jacob, in fact, asked Joseph to bring him reports (37:14).

As if that weren't enough, Joseph was also a dreamer—and no ordinary dreamer at that. His dreams appeared to reflect a time when he would rule over his family, when he would be in a position of power, and his brothers would show him respect and obedience. It might have helped if Joseph had kept his dreams to himself; but, being something of a young braggart, he told his father and his brothers about the dreams (37:5–11). Needless to say, the brothers had good reason to feel hostile towards him.

Though the feelings of Joseph's brothers may have been justified and though their animosity may be understandable, their actions became murderous. As in the Cain and Abel story, rage became translated into fratricide: "they conspired . . . to kill him" (37:18). Although their conspiracy did not result in Joseph's murder, they did sentence him to a living death by arranging for Joseph to be sold as a slave to traders going to Egypt. As far as the brothers were concerned, Joseph was out of the way and out of their lives forever.

As mentioned previously, there are few, if any, people who live in family situations that are free from conflict. Ideal, conflict-free families just don't exist. Conflict erupts between husband and wife, parents and children, brothers and sisters.

Because we are human, we sin and are sinned against. No one is exempt. But that does not make conflict any easier. The pain is real and difficult, especially when it involves people whom we love and to whom we are related.

Family conflict can be long lasting. A brother once went to a far-away city to visit his sister whom he had not seen in forty years. They had spend a lifetime at a spiteful distance. When the brother knocked at her door, the sister refused to let him in. She was "too busy," she said. And the brother, after pleading unsuccessfully for several minutes, turned away, angrier than ever, but deeply saddened at the same time.

A FAMILY RECONCILED

The story of Joseph, however, does not end in an unresolved conflict of forty years. It does take a long time to happen, but reconciliation occurs.

Sold as a slave into Egypt, Joseph is by the grace of God able to rise above the circumstances in which he found himself. Indeed, he rose to a place of importance second only to Pharaoh, the Egyptian king. His dream as a teenager is to come true. In fact, it is his God-given ability to interpret dreams that gets him out of jail where he had been falsely imprisoned, and it is this same ability which opens the door to the king's court.

Pharaoh was also a dreamer, and he suffered from troublesome dreams. Joseph not only was able to decipher the meaning of those dreams, he also had the ability to make certain that the problems to which the king's dreams pointed would be lessened. Joseph realized that those dreams referred to the years ahead when there would be times of plenty and times of famine. Thus, Joseph arranged to store up food during the good times. Then, when the famine hit, he found himself in a most favored position. He alone had the key to unlock the sustenance for a hungry world.

Back in Canaan, unaware that Joseph was alive, Jacob's family was feeling the effects of the famine. Hearing that there was food to be had to the south, Jacob sent Joseph's brothers off to Egypt to buy food. The suspense builds as we await the confrontation. But, while Joseph recognizes his brothers, they fail to recognize him. As far as they can tell, he is simply an Egyptian overlord to whom they must show respect in order to survive.

Joseph works out an ingenious plan, one with which he will gain some sweet psychological revenge. At the same time, his

plan will set the stage for possible reconciliation. The problem is that the plan will take years to unfold and offers no certain success. But for Joseph it is the only hope there is.

For Joseph's plan to work, he must determine whether his brothers have changed or whether they are still their old manipulating, conniving, self-serving selves. Thus, he requires that Benjamin, the current "favorite" son of Jacob, be brought to Egypt. Joseph knows that the brothers' reaction to this requirement will tell him what he needs to know, whether they will once again deny their father in order to save their own skins.

What he finds is that the brothers have changed. They now think more of their father than of themselves. (See Genesis 44:34 where the son Judah says, "I fear to see the evil that would come upon my father" if they were to abandon the current favorite son.) Did years of guilt, shame, and fear improve them? Perhaps the brothers learned that even if their sin against Joseph was not discovered, they still had to live with the consequences.

In the final, climactic scene, Joseph reveals his identity, and the brothers embrace, collapsing in tears. These are not merely tears of joy; like the waters of Baptism, they are tears of cleansing. They effectively wash away the accumulated weight of unacknowledged and unrepented sin.

As said earlier, the story of Joseph is in its largest sense the story of God's working in and through people and events. Through Joseph, God provides the means whereby the starving masses are fed. It is also the story of God's working in and through a particular family. In this case, too, Joseph is God's agent. Joseph creates the climate which makes reconciliation possible. Because of Joseph and his carefully thought-out plan, the brothers are freed from their guilt and shame by responding truthfully and honestly. They are able to act responsibly without consideration of the possible consequences to themselves. And because they are truly repentant, because they have had a change of heart, new life becomes possible. The family comes back together.

Relationships in the family are really not that much different from other types of relationships. They may be more intense because they are more intimate, but they offer the same possibilities for pain and glory that other relationships do. The point is that reconciliation involves the same actions in any broken relationships. It should be clear from the Joseph story that no one is completely to blame for the breakdown of relationships; nor are any of the parties involved free from fault. The Bible

says, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

Joseph himself was far from being guiltless. In a sense, he provoked what happened to him; he could be a real trouble-maker. Thus, he had to bear some responsibility for his fate. But Joseph was also able to open himself to the possibility of reconciliation. He could simply have killed his brothers; instead he set up the circumstances which made reconciliation possible.

We too are responsible at least in part for many of our own problems with relationships. We are not pure. We cannot claim innocence. Yet, we too can find it within ourselves to be open to the possibility of reconciliation, to take the steps to make that possibility become a reality. This is especially true because we have experienced reconciliation through another "favorite son," Jesus. As St. Paul points out:

> Therefore, if any one is in Christ, [that person] is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.
>
> 2 Corinthians 5:17–10

When sin is washed away by the grace of God, new life begins. Reconciliation becomes possible. We can experience the joy felt by Jacob, Joseph, and his brothers. We can see that the story of Genesis—of human failing and God's grace—reaches its true conclusion in Christ.

TODAY'S STORY

Steve and Kristen sat in the car in his driveway. The silence was oppressive, as it had been ever since he had picked his daughter up at her home. Steve wanted to break the silence—needed to break it for his sanity—but he didn't know where to begin. He thought for a moment, cleared his throat, and said, "Kristen, I love you."

Kristen turned to him with eyes full of hate. "Sure you do," she said sarcastically. "I remember you saying the same thing to Mommy. You probably say that to Sally too, and to the stupid daughter of hers. You probably say that to everyone, but I don't

think you even know what it means." She turned and stared out the window again, then added, "You say it to Jennifer, don't you?" She didn't look at him, but the pain in her voice was clear.

Steve sighed. Always it was Jennifer who came up in the conversation. How could two girls who had so much in common dislike each other as much as they did? "Jennifer is my stepdaughter, Sally's daughter. I can't say that I love Jennifer yet; I'm just getting to know her. But you are my daughter. I know you and have known you all your life. And I love you—very much."

Silence. Kristen continued to stare out the window.

Steve was just reaching for the door handle when Kristen spoke. "Did you ever really love Mommy?" He turned to look at her, and this time the pain showed in her eyes as well.

"Yes, Kris, I did. I really, truly did." He hesitated, thinking about what to say honestly without hurting Kristen. "Things changed. I changed. Your mother changed. We began to hurt each other more than love each other. It wasn't good for any of us, you included. We both realized it was better for all of us if your mother and I divorced. And it has been better."

"For you, maybe," Kristen blurted, tears welling up in her eyes. "Maybe for Mommy, too. But what about me? Nobody really thinks about me. I have a new house, a new stepmother, a new stepsister, soon a new stepfather and two bratty stepbrothers. I don't know where I belong or who my parents really are. I hate it all!" She burst into tears.

Steve put his arms around her and held her while she cried. "I do love you, Kris," he said softly, "and I know it's tough for all of us. But we need to try to care about each other, all of us. We need to try to understand and accept each other. That's the only way we'll all survive."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In what ways is this story similar to the story of Joseph? In what ways is it different?
2. How would you encourage Steve and Kristen to solve their problems?
3. What are examples in your own life of the kind of family conflict described in both the Genesis and the "Today's Story"?

Adult Studies
Living Faith Series

24–1252

THEY OPENED THE SHOW

THE MAIN CHARACTERS OF GENESIS

LEADER GUIDE

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LEADER GUIDE

BY LOWELL A. ANDERSON
CARL D. SHANKWEILER, EDITOR

LIVING FAITH SERIES
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LIVING FAITH SERIES
ADULT STUDIES

This Leader Guide is for use with *They Opened the Show: The Main Characters of Genesis,* Participant Book (24-1252).

Designed and illustrated by Terry O'Brien.

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INTRODUCTION

This study deals with six of the most important stories from the Book of Genesis. These are important stories because they deal with issues that are common to human beings everywhere. They are not just stories, however, for they contain a wealth of theological insights. Although they use the language and images typical of the ancient Near East, they are concerned with God's relationship with the world and its people. They also have to do with our relationships with one another. The purpose of this study is to have the participants reflect on the meanings that these stories have for their own lives.

Each of the six stories will be studied individually, so each session in this study can stand by itself. An informal approach is suggested. Participants should be encouraged to become actively involved in discussions and other class activities.

The stories themselves should be read during the class session. If there is not time to read an entire story, then the portions of the story most relevant to the session should be read. The reading may be done by the leader or by one of the participants.

Sections of the participant book can be read before or after the discussion related to them. If your group members can be counted on to read the material before coming to class, fine; but do not base your discussion on the assumption that all have read the book when some persons, such as visitors, obviously have not.

Although this guide gives suggestions about how to conduct the six sessions, the leader should feel free to use the methods and outline which work best with the group.

Background material in this course is kept at a minimum in order to concentrate on the stories themselves. Leaders and par-

ticipants who wish additional technical information might consult these resources:

Brueggemann, Walter. *Genesis*. Interpretation. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982.

McCurley, Foster R. *Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers*. Proclamation Commentaries. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979.

von Rad, Gerhard. *Genesis: A Commentary*. rev. ed. The Old Testament Library. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972.

Speiser, E. A., ed. *Genesis*. The Anchor Bible Series, vol. 1. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1964.

SESSION ONE

ADAM AND EVE
FREEDOM TO DIE

SCOPE OF THE SESSION

Through a study of the story of Adam and Eve, participants will be encouraged to think about what it means to live as creatures of God in relationship with God and with one another. They will consider the consequences of breaking those relationships including God's response to human disobedience.

OVERVIEW

1. Introduction of Participants and of the Course
2. Genesis
3. Creation (2:4b–17)
4. Creation of the Helper (2:18–25)
5. Disobedience in the Garden (3:1–7)
6. Consequences (3:8–24)
7. Today's Story
8. Conclusion

MATERIALS NEEDED

Bibles (needed for every session)
Participant books (needed for every session)

THE SESSION IN DETAIL

1. Introduction of Participants and of the Course
Ask the participants to think of one Old Testament story which stands out in their minds above all others. It may be a story

which is important to them or which they remember vividly from childhood. After a few moments for thought, ask the participants to tell the entire group their names and identify their stories.

If any of the stories mentioned are included in this study, point out that fact. Give a brief overview of the six sessions by drawing the group's attention to the table of contents in the participant book. Emphasize that the reason for this study is more than to review some familiar Bible stories. These stories are not being studied simply because they are a significant part of our religious heritage; rather, the purpose of this course is to look again at familiar tales because they contain vital truths about our human condition.

2. GENESIS

You may want to distribute Bibles. The Revised Standard Version is a good translation to use. For your convenience, the essential passages for each session are printed in the participant book; but because of limited space, the type is small. Also, some persons may prefer to use their own Bibles; offer participants that option.

You could ask the participants to bring their own favorite versions, for it can be interesting to hear how various translations have translated the same passage. On the other hand, you may find that having all participants use the same translation is more manageable.

Have one person in the group read Genesis 2:4b—3:24. If you do not want to read the entire story, read 2:4b-9, 2:15—3:13, and 3:16-24 as printed in the participant book.

Ask the group to say briefly what they think this story is about. Mention that the stories in the first eleven chapters of Genesis have to do with God's relationship to the creation as well as our relationships with one another. This material was not written to answer historical questions, but to deal with theological concerns such as, Why is there sin? Why is there pain? Why must we work so hard? Why do people war against one another?

Suggest that the group try to set aside their own ideas about Genesis 2 and 3. Point out that this is difficult to do. We all read the Bible with ideas in mind that we have been taught or

have come to believe are true. Mention that many meanings which may or may not be valid have been pinned to the story of Adam and Eve.

3. Creation (2:4b–17)

Explain that there are four essential parts to this story, the first being 2:4b–17. Ask for a volunteer to summarize those verses. Call attention to the creation of man, the planting of the garden, the identification of the two trees, and God's command. Note also that God has given the man everything he needs to live—a garden, a vocation, and a relationship with the Creator.

4. Creation of the Helper (2:18–25)

What is the problem referred to in verses 18 through 25? The creation is totally complete, but God recognizes that the man needs a partner. Even though the man has all the resources necessary for life, he isn't complete: he was made to live in community with other human beings. Note that this is not so much a story about marriage as it is about human community. Man and woman are shown to be equal; man needs a counterpart in woman.

Some persons have argued on the basis of these verses that women were made to be inferior to men. After all, the male was created first, and the woman was made to be a "helper." Dr. Foster McCurley points out, however:

> Neither of these issues leads to the superiority of the male over the female. In the first place, that the woman was created last could lead to the conclusion that she is the pinnacle of creation, just as the last created in Genesis 1 are the man and the woman. Second, the translation "a helper fit for him" (RSV) is not as accurate as it could be. Better is "a help as his counterpart," for the Hebrew *kenegdo* must mean something like "as the one opposite him, counter to him." But this rendering still has in it the word "help," implying that the woman is to be man's assistant. Such a distortion can be discounted immediately when one realizes that the word "help" (*ezer*) is used elsewhere in the Old Testament only in reference to God. "Help" comes from the Lord (Pss. 20:2; 121:1–2;

124:8), and indeed the Lord himself *is* "help" (Exod. 18:4, Deut. 33:7; Pss. 33:20; 70:5; 115:9, 10,11; 146:5). Thus, far from denoting an inferior position, the word "help" assigns to the woman a term used only for God himself. While this terminology in no way leads to a divine status for the woman, it does render unacceptable any view which considers the woman to be inferior. Indeed, it is for this woman that the man leaves his father and mother and cleaves to his wife (v. 24).[1]

5. Disobedience in the Garden (3:1–7)

Have the group suppose that they are writing a story about evil, and they have to use as one of the characters an animal which could best portray evil. What animal would they use?

Ask the group how they feel about snakes. Most will probably have negative feelings. Why? Down through history, the snake has taken a lot of abuse. The snake is not a very attractive creature and is sometimes lethal.

What role does the snake play in this story? It is important to understand that the snake is merely an actor. The snake is not Satan but a creation of God. The snake itself is not a representation of evil. For the purpose of the story, the snake causes Adam and Eve to reconsider God's prohibition.

What is at the heart of their disobedience? The desire to "be like God." As the participant book points out, they exceeded the limits of their freedom and attempted to break down the barrier between Creator and creature. In this regard:

> The story of Adam and Eve is not a unique experience; it is the story of every human being. "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23; cf. also 5:12).[2]

What does Adam and Eve's experience say about human beings in general? Are we not usually looking out for "number one?" Do we not often feel that things are stacked against us and that we are not treated the way we deserve to be treated?

1. Foster R. McCurley, *Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers,* Proclamation Commentaries (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 18.
2. Ibid, 23.

6. CONSEQUENCES (3:8–24)

Ask individuals in the group to list the consequences of Adam's and Eve's disobedience. Some of these consequences take place immediately; others come as God's response. Point out that the scenario in the story assumes the form of a trial. God is the judge and Adam and Eve are the defendants. Note how Adam and Eve try to shift the blame. Can members of your group think of any examples when they admitted willingly that they were responsible for an injustice or other type of sin? People usually try to shift the blame.

7. TODAY'S STORY

Read "Today's Story" from the participant book. The participant book gives several questions for discussion. If your group is large, you may want to divide into smaller groups of five persons each to discuss this story.

8. CONCLUSION

Conclude the session by saying that Adam and Eve's guilt is never questioned; it is assumed. They are indeed guilty and they deserve to die. But what happens? A miracle. God does not follow through with his threat; Adam and Eve are allowed to live. True, they cannot stay in the garden; they must go into the world and make their own way. But they are protected by God as they do so. Their nakedness and their shame are covered up by grace. Although they must live with the consequence of their sin, God clothes them and protects them.

While we cannot live as gods, we can live as human beings, in relationship with God and under God's protective and forgiving love.

Close with this prayer or one of your own choosing: *God, you have certainly been patient with us, providing for us and protecting us when we deserve nothing but your punishment. Thank you for your ongoing love. Help us, in turn, to be patient with others, to acknowledge you alone as God, and to be obedient to your commands. Amen*

SESSION TWO

CAIN AND ABEL
DON'T BLAME ME

SCOPE OF THE SESSION

In this story of Cain and Abel, we will be discussing the meaning of human community, what it means to live in relationship with one another. We will also see that sin leads to a breakdown of not only our relationships with other people, but also our relationship with God. As we already saw with Adam and Eve, sin has to do with disobedience, with usurping the prerogative of God.

OVERVIEW

1. Introduction
2. The Setting (4:1–7)
2. The Murder (4:8)
4. Judgment (4:9–14)
5. Grace (4:15–16)
6. Today's Story
7. Conclusion

MATERIALS NEEDED

Chalkboard and chalk, or newsprint and markers

THE SESSION IN DETAIL

1. INTRODUCTION
Welcome all participants, especially new persons. Ask someone in the class to read Genesis 4:1–16 (printed in the participant book).

Begin a general discussion by asking participants if there were any particular words, phrases, or portions of the text which caught their attention. Ask, too, for any questions of clarification regarding the story. Note these questions on a chalkboard or newsprint; do not get into an involved discussion at this time. Deal with these questions later as they relate to the specific portions of the passage.

Using the participant book, summarize briefly the introductory material for this session. Note that the message of this story has to do with our relationship with God and with one another. It tells about an act of rebellion against God. Cain is the focus of the action and the focus of the writer's concern. Cain rebels, Cain sins, and God reacts. Point out, too, what a small role Abel plays in the story. It is what Cain does and how God responds that is important.

2. THE SETTING (4:1–7)

Ask several members of the group to summarize verses 1 through 7 in their own words.

One issue which may arise is the reason for the rejection of Cain's offering. Was there any reason for him to assume that his offering was not as good as Abel's? We do not know. Nor do we know why God was displeased with Cain's offering. Obviously, those kinds of issues are not at the heart of the story. As Dr. McCurley has written:

> The story in Genesis 4:1–6 is told not to extol one occupation over the other, but to relate one more account of rebellion and its consequent expulsion from the ground and from the presence of the Lord. The storyteller does not explain why the Lord accepted the animal offering of Abel but not the fruit offering of Cain. But as a result of the discrepancy Cain was filled with anger. In a fury that began at a sacrificial altar of God, Cain killed his own brother in the field, spilled his blood on the ground, and thus took upon himself the prerogative of God over life and death.[3]

3. Ibid. 25–26.

Also of interest in these verses is the image of sin. Sin is seen as an active force seeking to gain dominance over us. Vigilance is needed. Even more interesting is the notion that sin can be mastered (verse 7). Can we conquer sin? The reality we confront is that expressed in 1 John 1:8, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." On the other hand, 1 Peter 5:8-9 warns us to "resist" the devil who seeks "some one to devour."

3. The Murder (4:8)

Does the class consider it a sin to get angry? What is the real problem with anger? You may wish to discuss problems in our modern world which result from anger on a personal, national, or international scale. Sometimes anger is good and right, but anger is often a destructive force and a justification for treating other people as if they were less than human. In Cain's case, his anger led him to commit murder and play God.

4. Judgment (4:9–14)

You might discuss the topic "Am I my brother's keeper." Ask what verses 8 and 9 say about our responsibility for one another. Does that responsibility involve only our refraining from harmful acts, or does that responsibility include helping the "brother" withstand the dangers brought about by third parties? Suggest that human community and its continuation depend upon our living out the conviction that we are responsible for each other.

In verses 9 through 14, what does God's judgment mean for Cain? How does Cain respond? Is it right to say that we, too, deserve the punishment that Cain received because we also have rebelled against God?

5. Grace (4:15–16)

Verses 15 and 16 are the most important part of the story. Even though Cain deserves to die for what he has done—and surely he would have died if the original sentence had been carried out—God shows mercy. He puts his protective mark on Cain:

> Thus in the midst of severe judgment—expulsion from the ground and from the near presence of the Lord—Cain

knew that God had the last word: it was a word of grace in spite of human horror.[4]

Ask the class if they feel God dealt fairly with Cain. Did he get what he deserved? Is it also true of us, as it was with Cain, that we must live with the consequences of our sin while also continuing to be in God's love?

6. Today's Story
Read the story in the participant book, and then use the "Discussion Questions."

7. Conclusion
Check to be sure that you dealt with all of the issues which you listed on newsprint at the beginning of the session.

Close the session by reading the last paragraph of the section "Grace (4:15–16)" in the participant book. You may also wish to close with this prayer: *Dear God, we thank you for the mercy you show to us every day. We are especially grateful for the love we have experienced in knowing Jesus Christ, our Lord. Forgive us for our rebellious spirits, for believing we can run our lives ourselves, for our failure to perceive other people as our brothers and sisters and your children. Help us to live in peace and harmony with all of your creatures. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen*

4. Ibid. 26.

SESSION THREE

NOAH
SAVING RAIN

SCOPE OF THE SESSION

The story of Noah and the flood has become extremely popular and is well known around the world. Perhaps it has become too popular. On the one hand, fundamentalist Christians take the story so literally that they traipse up and down mountains in the Middle East looking for the ark. On the other hand, the story is taken so lightly that it has become the source for jokes by stand-up comedians. In either case, the message of the story is often lost.

The purpose of our study is twofold: (1) we will consider the origins of the story in order to understand better the biblical account; and (2) we will strive to determine what this story is saying about our relationship to God and God's ongoing relationship to creation.

OVERVIEW

1. Introduction
2. The Bible and Ancient Flood Stories
3. Two Stories in One
4. Human Evil and God's Response (6:5—7:23)
5. New Beginning (8:1—9:17)
6. Today's Story

THE SESSION IN DETAIL

1. INTRODUCTION

Greet everyone and introduce new participants.

Ask if any members of the group have ever been caught in a flood. If so, have them share the details of that experience. How did they feel? What were the most fearful aspects of the situation? If no one in the group has been in a flood, talk about floods in general. What makes a flood so devastating?

For some ancient peoples, floods were especially feared because of a belief that the world is surrounded by water; if the universe were to collapse, people would be inundated and immediately swept to a watery grave. Water was chaos, destruction. Such a belief would, of course, heighten the impact of a flood story.

Using the participant book, review briefly the material related to flood stories in the ancient Middle East. Give special attention to the Gilgamesh Epic. Try to avoid an extended discussion at this point, but note the main components of the flood stories which have come from the group and from Mesopotamia. How do these stories compare with the biblical story as the group remembers it?

2. The Bible and Ancient Flood Stories

Read through the relevant material in the participant book. Note the differences between the Gilgamesh Epic, the main character from which is Uta-napishtim, and the Bible's account. Stress the fact that the biblical writers had a theological purpose in telling the story. Perhaps using the Babylonian material, they fashioned a story which turns out very differently. In the Bible, we learn that God's anger is due to rebellion and wickedness on the part of the people. God's decision to flood the earth is not capricious, but constitutes judgment for sin. We also learn that ultimately God's love conquers the divine wrath. God spares Noah and his family along with various animals, and at the end, God solemnly promises never again to destroy the earth by flood.

If you want to do additional reading about the Gilgamesh Epic, use the following resources:

Heidel, Alexander. *The Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament Parallels.* 2nd ed. Phoenix Books. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946.

Prichard, James. *Ancient Near East in Pictures with Supplement.* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1962.

3. Two Stories in One

There are some tensions in the Genesis flood story largely because two separate stories have been combined by an editor. You will probably not want to spend much time on this point, but it should be noted. Stress the need to look at the story as a whole; in that way it becomes easier to understand its underlying message, which has to do with human rebellion and God's ongoing relationship to creation.

4. Human Evil and God's Response (6:5—7:23)

Now get into the story itself. You need not read the whole story, but do ask someone to read 6:5–8, 13–14a, 17—7:5, 11–17, 21–22, as printed in the participant book. Then ask others in the group to provide a brief summary of that portion of the story.

Some major points to consider discussing are the sinfulness of the human race, the portrayal of God as an involved and caring deity, and God's response to human evil (in this case a decision to wipe out most of creation).

Ask the group if they see any parallels between the time of Noah and our time. Is it true to say that something has gone terribly wrong with what God intended for the world?

What is Noah's role in the story? Point out that Noah comes from nowhere but is a righteous person. His role is that of a "new Adam," a new beginning. He is to play that role because he "walked with God" (6:9).

5. New Beginning (8:1—9:17)

Read 8:1—9:17. If you want to read fewer verses, read only 8:1-4, 13, 18—9:1, 8–17, as printed in the participant book.

The important message in the final section of the story is that God responds with grace. Even though God realizes that the flood did not change anything, God still promises never again to destroy the earth by a flood. Gerhard von Rad points out:

> The Hebrew word that we translate "rainbow" usually means in the Old Testament "the bow of war." The beauty of the ancient conception thus became apparent:

> God shows the world that he has put aside his bow. Man knows of the blessing of this new gracious relationship in the stability of the orders of nature. . . . [5]

Ask the participants how they would have reacted to the fact that human wickedness still prevailed, even after the flood. Would they be as tolerant and patient as God, a God who preserves and supports nature in spite of human evil? You may also ask: "How does God react to human wickedness today? Does God deliberately send suffering to sinners to punish them?"

6. TODAY'S STORY

After reading and discussing "Today's Story," ask the group to reflect silently on God's goodness to them in spite of their faults. Then invite a few sentence prayers which express gratitude for life and for the creation. Conclude with this prayer for a peaceful, safe world: *O God, grant your creatures the wisdom, courage, and determination to work for peace. And help us, too, to work for justice which contributes to peace. Amen*

5. Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis*, rev. ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972), 134.

SESSION FOUR

TOWER OF BABEL
STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN

SCOPE OF THE SESSION

In our study of the Tower of Babel we will consider what the tower meant in terms of its theological implications, and we will also see how this story relates to our relationships with God and with one another.

OVERVIEW

1. Introduction
2. Essence of the Story
3. The Tower of Babylon
4. God's Response
5. Today's Story
6. Summary

MATERIALS NEEDED

Paper and pencils

THE SESSION IN DETAIL

1. INTRODUCTION

Ask each member of the group to write down on paper the names of the ten persons he or she considers to be the most famous people in the world. Next, ask them to write down the ten most powerful people in the world. Share the answers and compare the two lists. It is likely that some persons will have listed the same people.

Use this exercise to lead into a discussion of fame and power. How did these people become famous and powerful? Are fame and power good? Why do people seek fame and power? What drives them? You are not looking for right or wrong answers here, but rather a discussion which will bring you to the substance of the story of the Tower of Babel.

2. Essence of the Story

Ask a member of the group to read Genesis 11:1–9, as printed in the participant book.

Summarize the story itself and the beginning section of the participant book by saying that the story has to do with people who wanted to make a name for themselves. They believed that by so doing, they could guarantee their security. They were afraid of the "world," and they felt that if they could build impressive structures, they would strengthen the unity of their group and keep potential enemies at a distance.

All of this, however, symbolized something more. It symbolized their attempt to play at being God. If the tower would do what it was supposed to do, the people might even get the idea that they were gods. They would more than likely come to believe they did not need God, that they could take care of themselves.

> The people's plan to build the city and temple-tower was accompanied by their wish to "make a name for ourselves." This desire seems to represent not only human conceit but another attempt to appropriate to the creature what belongs to the Creator alone (cf. 12.2 where the Lord promised to Abraham, "I will make your name great"). Their expressed motive for their building and self-esteem was to prevent dispersion over the whole earth. And so they proceeded with their plans.[6]

3. The Tower of Babylon

Ask the group to describe church buildings they have visited which made an impression on them. Perhaps some have visited some of the great cathedrals in Europe. Why was a particular

6. McCurley, 32.

building impressive? What was special about it? Did they feel a sense of holiness connected with it? Point out that religious buildings are often constructed in such a way that people feel in touch with the deity. And many people still believe that God is somehow more present in a church building than in a business office.

The reference to the tower in our story has to do with a Babylonian ziggurat. Take the group on an imaginary visit to Babylon to see one. If you can, show pictures of the ruins of ziggurats or artists' reconstructions of what they looked like. Point to the material about ziggurats in the participant book that describes them as points of entrance to heaven. Was there anything wrong with the people wanting to put up a religious building? Was it the tower that was wrong, or was their motivation for building the tower wrong?

Ask the group to discuss in their own words the meaning of the tower. Stress that because the people thought they could secure their lives with this tower, it became an evil thing. The tower symbolized the belief that they could have access to God for their own benefit. But could they touch God with their tower? Why or why not?

4. God's Response

Ask the group how the earth appears when looked at from an airplane. In the same way the tower must have seemed infinitesimal to God. Note how the biblical writer has captured the humor in God's having to descend to the earth to see what these crazy humans are up to. Obviously, the tower did not live up to its builders' expectations. Rather than secure their lives, it had the opposite effect. God responded by scattering them over the face of the earth and confusing their language. The very thing they had feared had come to pass.

5. Today's Story

Read the story, and then answer the "Discussion Questions."

Although the story is very true to life, it may be too true for your congregation. Do not let the discussion become a judgmental put-down of someone who has expressed the kinds of views held by the councilperson in the story. But do raise the issue of the purpose of our religious buildings.

6. Summary

If someone in the group speaks a language other than English, ask that person to tell the story of the Tower of Babel in that language. Then ask the group if they understood what was said.

If no one speaks a non-English language, divide the participants into groups of two and ask one person in each group to attempt to tell the story of the Tower of Babel to the other without speaking. Allow just a few minutes for this exercise.

The point of this activity is to help participants realize that communication makes human relationships possible. If we cannot understand one another, it becomes extremely difficult to work together, to build trust, to live in peace. The story of the Tower of Babel is told to explain what happens when our relationship with God is broken: we lose our ability to communicate with other people, and thus the hope for the relationship is also lost. The story of the Tower of Babel, then, is a contemporary story. Even today the problems we face as individuals, as a nation, and as a world result from our broken relationship with God.

Close with a prayer for unity under God: *O God, you have called us together into your church. You desire us to be one, to live in harmony. Help us to be humble in our strength and accomplishments so that our deeds as individuals and as a group serve and please you. Amen*

SESSION FIVE

ABRAHAM, SARAH, AND ISAAC
THE BIRTH OF A NATION

SCOPE OF THE SESSION

In the development of the Judeo-Christian tradition, Abraham stands out as one of the most important personages. He is known as the father of the faith. In this study, we will attempt to determine the reason for Abraham's significance. We will see that Abraham was a very human vessel, chosen by God to carry out God's will. Because our study encompasses so much material, we will center on three themes: the promise of God, the faith of Abraham, and the faithfulness of God.

OVERVIEW

1. Introduction
2. The Promise of God
3. The Faith of Abraham
4. The Faithfulness of God
5. Today's Story and Conclusion

MATERIALS NEEDED

Chalkboard and chalk, or newsprint and markers

THE SESSION IN DETAIL

1. INTRODUCTION

Begin the session by asking the participants why they think Abraham is given a place of prominence in Judaism and Christianity. List their responses on chalkboard or newsprint. If the following are not mentioned, add them to your list: Abraham

was the patriarch of Israel, the source of Jewish faith, the progenitor of the Jewish nation. As you review the list, it should be apparent why Abraham is so important as far as Judaism is concerned. He is important for Christians because our faith is rooted in the Jewish tradition; the New Testament shows him to be the father of all who have faith in God (Romans 4:16–17).

Review the introductory portion of the participant book. The story of Abraham is long and complicated. It would be easy to get bogged down in myriad details. Inform the group that this study is going to focus on three major themes: the promise of God, the faith of Abraham, and the faithfulness of God.

2. The Promise of God

Ask a member of the group to read Genesis 12:1–17 and 13:14–18 (printed in the participant book). Note that in this passage, Abraham (here called Abram) is commanded by God to leave his home and go "to the land that I will show you" (12:1). This command is coupled with a series of promises. Ask the group to state the promises in their own words and write them on the chalkboard or newsprint. (The promises are: a great nation, a blessing, a great name, a blessing to those who bless Abraham, and a curse on "him who curses you.") When Abraham arrives in the land of Canaan, another promise is given, the land itself (12:7). The promises are given so that he will be a blessing to the world (12:3).

God's promise to Abraham is unilateral: God gives the promise freely, without demanding anything from Abraham. As we will see, even when Abraham does not believe God's promise, it still comes true.

Have a member of the group read Genesis 17:1–5, 15–19 (printed in the participant book). Ask if anyone knows the meaning of the word *covenant*. *Covenant* refers to a solemn agreement; here it is almost another word for *promise*.

Ask the group to summarize the verses read from chapter 17 in their own words. Notice the humor in the story. God tells Abraham that Sarah is going to be a "mother of nations" (17:16) and Abraham falls down laughing. But God persists, even naming their first child Isaac and extending the convenant to him. You may wish to point out that this chapter also pro-

vides the background for the practice of circumcision; it is a "sign of the covenant" (17:11), not a condition for it.

Ask one of the group to read Genesis 21:1–7 (printed in the participant book). You will want merely to point out that Isaac is born and circumcised—the promise takes flesh. Abraham is one hundred years old.

Review the story thus far. Abraham is chosen by God and sent to a new land. He is promised a blessing, land, descendants, and that he will, through his descendants, be a blessing to the whole world. It is all very wonderful and incredible.

3. The Faith of Abraham

Ask for volunteers to read these four stories: 12:10–13, 15, 17–18; 13:1 and 15:1–6 and 16:1–4 and 22:1–13 (printed in the participant book). These are difficult passages, but they must be dealt with. They show us that Abraham's faith was not always strong (Genesis 12, 15 and 16), and that when it was, he was prepared to sacrifice his son (Genesis 22). (You might note that one purpose of the Genesis 22 story may have been to announce that God does not require child sacrifice.)

Ask the group for their definition of the word *faith*. Use the chalkboard or newsprint to list their answers. You will want to arrive at the idea that faith is not so much right belief as it is trust and obedience. We call Abraham a man of faith because he trusted and obeyed God: he obeyed God's command to leave home and family for a new land; he trusted (at first) that God would give him a son; he trusted that God would care for him in a strange land among a strange people; he obeyed God when ordered to sacrifice his only son.

Review the material that deals with Abraham's humanity—how he was not always faithful. The two examples given here are his dealings with Pharaoh and his attempt to assure that he would have a son. Discuss the nature of faith—the fact that faith comes and goes. Note that we, too, are not always faithful. But note also that God can use us, even when we fail, if we remain open to his leading in our lives.

4. The Faithfulness of God

Ask the group to share examples of experiences from their own life when they have known God's faithfulness. Then refer back

to the story of Abraham. Read Genesis 25:7–11, as printed in the participant book. Note that Abraham's God was the one God who created the heavens and the earth. Ask for examples of God's faithfulness in the story of Abraham. (Abraham is given the land; he is given a son; he is blessed and the people around him are blessed; he lives to a ripe old age.) In spite of Abraham's faithlessness, God remained faithful.

5. Today's Story and Conclusion

Read and discuss "Today's Story" from the participant book. The last discussion question deals with contemporary examples of God's faithfulness. An important message of the story of Abraham for us today is the concept of the faithfulness of God. This is especially important in a world which basically has no use for God, a world in which faith is absent or lacking.

Ask the group what event, from a Christian perspective, best exemplifies God's faithfulness. Is it the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ? Note that the cross and resurrection are the signs that God's faithfulness endures forever, for God's Christ went all the way to death in faithfulness to his love for us, but now reigns eternally. The cross and resurrection are the culmination of the promise given to Abraham.

You may wish to close the session by asking the group to share sentence prayers. Thank God for promises, for the faith we have been given, and for God's faithfulness by which we live.

SESSION SIX

JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS

ALL IN THE FAMILY

SCOPE OF THE SESSION

Like the story of Abraham, Joseph's story is long, involved, and complicated. To study Joseph thoroughly would take several weeks. Thus, in our discussion we will focus attention only on some of the more significant events in Joseph's life. The thrust of this study will deal with the conflict in Joseph's family, the results of that conflict, and how reconciliation is achieved.

OVERVIEW

1. Introduction
2. A Family Feuding
3. Consequences of Conflict
4. A Family Reconciled
5. Today's Story and Conclusion

MATERIALS NEEDED

Chalkboard and chalk, or newsprint and markers

THE SESSION IN DETAIL

1. INTRODUCTION

Begin the session by asking the participants to tell what they know about Joseph and his story. Explain that this is a long story, covering chapters 37 through 50 in Genesis. Summarize

the material found in the introductory portion of the participant book, or have one of the group read the material.

Another way to begin this study would be to have the group follow along as you review briefly each chapter, 37 through 50. The purpose of your summary is to give the group a feel for the flow of the action in the story without getting bogged down in details. For chapter 38, the story of Judah and Tamar, simply note that this is not an essential part of the Joseph story. It is probably an independent unit, part of a personalized history of the tribe of Judah, explaining how that tribe was saved from extinction by the unorthodox behavior of a Canaanite daughter-in-law.

A third way to approach such a long story would be to read the portions printed in the participant book. These excerpts were selected because they relate to the points made during this session.

2. A Family Feuding

Have a member of the group read Genesis 37:2–13, 17b–27, as printed in the particpant book. Ask the group to describe the family conflict. What were the reasons for it? A main reason was Jacob's obvious favoritism toward Joseph. Ask the group to give examples of this favoritism (making Joseph the long robe, asking Joseph to report about his brothers). Another reason why the brothers would feel animosity toward Joseph was the dreams which Joseph had. Point out that it was very natural for the brothers to feel less than kindly toward Joseph, who was a mere seventeen years old.

Ask the group to list reasons for conflict in today's families. These reasons may relate to problems in the participants' own lives or the lives of people they know. List the reasons on the chalkboard or newsprint. Are these reasons typical? Are any families free from conflict?

3. Consequences of Conflict

Ask participants to explain in their own words what happened to Joseph as a result of this family conflict. As part of this discussion, consider the problem of anger. What did the brothers' anger lead to? Is anger necessarily wrong? Point out that anger is a feeling all people have at times. Anger isn't wrong in

and of itself, but it can lead to actions which are harmful to all involved. In Joseph's case, it led at first to attempted murder and then to his being sold as a slave.

Note that the conflict and the actions resulting from the conflict had a lasting impact upon the entire family. Joseph is removed from the family for years, and the father, Jacob, is heartbroken (37:34–35).

4. A Family Reconciled

If you didn't already do so, involve the entire group in listing on newsprint in chronological order the events in Joseph's life after his arrival in Egypt. You may want to have everyone use Bibles as a resource, for it was not possible to include all the relevant material in the participant book. Use this exercise to set the scene for the reconciliation of the family. Another approach would simply be to read through the section titled "A Family Reconciled" in the participant book.

Ask the group to discuss Joseph's plan to achieve reconciliation. How, exactly, does he intend to bring the family back together? Point out that Joseph could have revealed himself to his brothers immediately, but such an action would not have told him what he needed to know. He needed to know if the brothers had changed, or if they were still the murderous, self-serving siblings he had known years ago. Ask the group what part Benjamin, the current favorite, plays in Joseph's plan. Why is the plan effective? (See especially 44:18–34 where Judah offers himself as a slave rather than have Benjamin taken from Jacob.) What is involved in reconciliation? You will want to note that the brothers had changed; that Joseph was open to forgiveness; that all of the family members were ready to begin again.

Complete this part of the session by having members of the group read chapter 45:1–15, 24–28, and 50:19–20. Notice Joseph's rationale. God has been working in his life all along. Joseph was in Egypt as part of God's plan to preserve life, including a remnant of the Hebrew people.

5. Today's Story and Conclusion

After reading and discussing "Today's Story," ask the participants what they believe the story of Joseph has to say about

contemporary life. Does this story have any relevance to us? If so, what? The participant book says that everyone must assume responsibility for the conflict, that no one can claim innocence. Does the class agree? It also talks about setting up the circumstances which make reconciliation possible, but it doesn't spell out what those circumstances are. How is reconciliation possible when there is conflict between people, either within or outside of the family?

It would be appropriate here to close with a brief statement regarding the gospel. The gospel is the good news that, while "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23), God loves us and accepts us and cares for us. He even sent his only Son, not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved (John 3:16–17). Herein lies the possibility for reconciliation. We have been forgiven and reconciled to God. So we love, we forgive, we seek reconciliation "because [God] first loved us" (1 John 4:19).

In conclusion, invite reactions to the course. What did the group find helpful? What did they dislike? Announce the next opportunities for adult education in your congregation, and explain how your participants can take part in those events or groups.

End with sentence prayers that reflect matters of concern or thanksgiving.

Adult Studies
Living Faith Series

24-1253

1. EXPLAIN JEDP

Abraham is mostly J ~~with two exceptions~~ but many E incursions

J ~~3~~ XII:1-4A 6-9 "Go forth from your native land" ~~$~~ 46.5 (P)

ALL WORDS WERE PRECIOUS: to give one's word. Naming was an important power. Any written word was extremely powerful "MAGIC". Pictures were strong magic. Non-representational people. The collector of the stories felt all were important and none were cast aside. Weaves JEP together in best way - probably done around 800 BC at time of David. Recension - Editing. (400 written above 800)

J 1st story of Egypt + Abraham giving Pharaoh his "sister": XII-10-20 - Second sister story XX E Abimelec K of Gerar.

J Abram + Lot dividing the land - Lot took Jordan Plain — all the way to Zoar - S+G introomission

X? who - Historical note - very early before S+G destroyed
XIV:1-24 or even thought of being destroyed
Abram is identified as Abram the Hebrew
discourse on Habiru, Ibri, etc.
318 warriors - no cheap shepherd.
El Elyon is Yahweh - later recension

XV 1-21 Shed of Abram - making of covenant
[13-15] E

XVI-1-16 Ishamael - Hagar
J/P Ancient ~~Ez~~ Nuzi texts show exactly this kind of arrangement as legally binding.
EL ROI
Cast out of house for arrogance before birth

/P/ Covenant + circumcision
XVII 1-27 EL Shaddai - only name known to the patriarchs Exod VI:3
Covenant - promise of male heir
circumcision - orig. puberty / premarital rite
had no custom in Mesopotamia - had to have come into Canaan to adopt.

XVIII 1-15 (J) Sarah laughed Itzak - Titzak
(all women lie)

XVIII-16-33 (J) Intercession for Sodom
50, 45, 40, 30, 20, 10

XIX 1-28 J S + G
29 (P)
XIX Lot + daughters

XXI /J/ 1-2 Birth of Isaac, circumcision, second
2b-5 /P/ casting out of Hagar.
E Playing = Isaac.

XXII.1-19 E/J Ordeal of Isaac.

Yahweh yirah
God is my vision

Most Profound personal experience of the Bible.

To sacrifice was to forgo the objective
Physical trial → spiritual ordeal.

TEST

Meanings
1. No child sacrifice for Israel?
(all their neighbors did so)
IIK III 27, XVII 31,

2. Obedience? Abraham had already proved his obedience in leaving Mesopotamia

3. How firm was Abraham's faith in the ultimate divine purpose?
maintain belief ~~when~~ in the promise when all seemed lost

Unswerving faith that could survive any trial!

Bought cave for Sarah's burial + Isaac + Ishmael buried him.

ASHE SPEAKS

I want to talk about women and class. I believe there are really constructive ways to look at class. I want to start by giving you a general rundown of class origins and how it affects us in our relationships. We always tend to look at class via differences. We don't tend to look at class as interaction and that's how I want to look at it. Class usually interests working class women more than it interests middle or upper class women. This is because, as working class women, we know our working class reality and we also know middle class reality. Just like every woman is brought up to know male reality as well as female reality; every black knows black reality as well as white reality. If you're a black woman, you're brought up to know black woman's reality, black male reality and whitey's reality.

Class Characteristics

Realize that what I am going to say is very general. You could say: "What's the use of generalities?" They're not meant to be held as absolutes. They're meant to organize, to give you an idea of what's happening. They're not meant to make yourself rigid around, they're to get some sense of how things are.

I want to look at the structure of society. You have the upper class on top, the middle class sandwiched in between, the working class on the bottom. About five percent of the people in the world run the world. They use the middle class to organize the lower classes. An upper class person will usually never meet a working class person socially and probably not many middle class people either. When you think of the characteristics, there's going to be a lot of similarities between working class women and upper class women, the two pieces of bread in this sandwich. They are similar for very different reasons. Let's look at some of these similarities and differences.

For example, working class people believe in luck. In my neighborhood, I'm about the only one that got educated. That it happened to me because of my circumstances and the way things happen, that was luck. The upper classes believe in luck also. If you're somewhere at the right time and place, things will fall together. They believe everything's a gamble. You play the stock markets. You play this, you play that. You take a risk, and you make money or not depending on how good you gamble. Middle class people believe in hard work. They believe that if you work hard and you try harder, you'll get ahead. Now, each of these things is true within its class reality. It's true in the working class that it's luck; it's true in the upper classes that it's chance and gambling. It's true in the middle class that if you work hard, you'll get ahead. These differences aren't just magic. They come from our lifestyles, from our socialization, from our environments. We believe them because we learned to rely on them to survive.

Another way the upper and working classes are similar is this; it's all right in the working class and the upper class to be hostile. To those folks in the middle, it's very very important to be nice. Middle class people are usually the bosses of the working class; they are the educators, the managers, the authorities. Middle class people are working for the upper class, but they are looked down on for aspiring upward, or are simply ignored. Working class people usually hate them because they are bosses. Middle class people have a lot of hostility directed at them. They have limited power to deal with the hostility of the working class, and no power to deal with the hostility of the upper class. They protect themselves by being nice.

In the upper class and the working class it's OK to be eccentric. In the working class your life doesn't revolve around people liking you; you can be eccentric because you've got nothing to lose. When I worked in a factory all that mattered was that I did my job and did it well. When I was a telephone information operator it didn't matter if the other women didn't like me much. It's the same with the upper class. They don't need to be liked. They have room to be eccentric, to indulge. They have nothing to lose. The middle class person has a lot to lose by being eccentric, so they tend to be more conservative. They'll tell you "don't be so loud." It's important for them to be liked. For example, now that I have a middle class job, I act like that too. I am a therapist; my job is based on popularity. If people don't like me they don't come to me.

Bonding

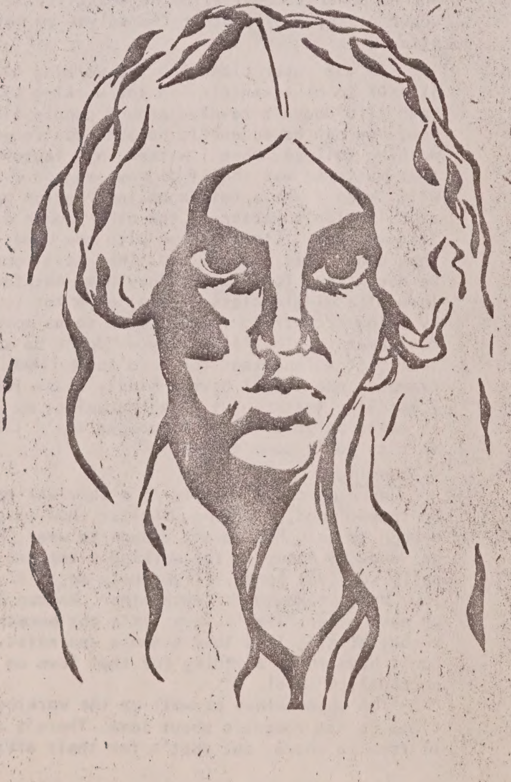
Working class reality is a survival reality. You need: food, clothing, shelter. How to get enough to eat, how to get enough to wear, how to get enough. Bonds in the working class are usually survival bonds. If you help me, I'll help you. We'll take care of each other. We can depend on each other. That's love. It's not necessarily verbal at all; it's love because you exist. You don't have to do anything for that love on a personality level.

The upper class as well as the working class is not romantic about love. There's a kind of romance there, but that's for their affairs;

it's not for their marital relationships. They marry for practical reasons; to preserve the blood and their social standing.

Middle class love is different. In the middle class, love has got to do with caring, affection and warmth. You're loved for doing what you're supposed to do.

Here is an example of the difference between working class and middle class attitudes on love. I had my finger cut and it was getting more and more hurtful every day. I kept saying "Look at my finger, look it seems to be getting infected." I was really worried about my finger. A middle class friend said "Oh Ahshe, that's so bad, you poor thing, your finger really looks awful." The next day I said "It's just awful. It seems to be getting more and more infected all the time.". She said "Oh, that must hurt." She was giving me a lot of verbal support. In the meantime, I really didn't know what to do about my finger, it seemed to be getting more and more infected. Then I showed it to a working class woman. She cut it and cleaned it out, put a band-aid on it and told me to keep it clean. Then she yelled at me that I'm not taking care of myself. Her love was action based; I felt like she cared about me.



It works the other way around as well. It sounds like I'm the only one that gets fucked over: but I would fuck over my middle class friend a lot of times because I would give her action support when she wanted verbal support. She'd be really down and I wouldn't want to deal with her. She'd have to get the words together to say "Ahshe, you don't have to do anything, I just want to bitch for a couple of hours; all you have to do is listen." To me it seemed that I would have to do something about her down.

This action versus verbal reality also spreads to projects. A woman will say "Wow, we got a lot done" meaning she learned a lot and her consciousness was raised. A lot of verbal stuff happened for her. A working class woman says "Nothin's happening here" meaning they're not doing anything. If a lot of action is done with not much theorizing about it often the middle class woman will be very dissatisfied.

These class differences are important in the women's movement. How can you do a community task group, if you miss with half the community? Middle class people are natural organizers. Think of the jobs middle class people have: bankers, doctors, lawyers. They can deal in abstracts; set up clinics, set up this, set up that. They can organize something and then the working class people can come in and move with it. The working class people really deal well with concretes. They can make a lot of changes in the organization as they move with it. It's important to realize your organizing skills if you're middle class. Stand behind them. Stand behind your power and don't make believe that you're not really organizing when you are; I think that is patronizing. It means to me that the real job is the organizing and that the workers are just dumb. I think organizing and following through with concrete action are both important.

Money

Money is related to differently in different classes, too. Working class people tend to spend money; they don't save money. Who knows, you might die tomorrow. In the working class, if you get big money, or if you win some money, you treat your friends to go down to the bar and you give 'em all drinks. You give your money away. You never know if it's going to be there tomorrow; you spend it while you've got it.

Middle class people learn to delay gratification. They realize that they can save money; that it's important to save money. If you save money, your kid can go to college; this can happen, that can happen. They act this way because they usually have the money to pay for emergencies. When they save, they don't have to be afraid that something will come up and wipe out their savings. It doesn't pay for a working class person to save. Their savings always get wiped out.

Class/Caste

It's really a myth that we don't live in a class/caste society. Classes perpetuate themselves. You're working class, you're taught to

cont.

beat up the rest of the kids or he wasn't a man. Everybody had to go through that ordeal of who you could beat up, or who you would stand up against. I didn't get into so much of that, being a girl.

Middle class people usually engage in verbal violence instead. I have trouble with that sometimes, but not so much now because I'm upwardly mobile. I understand more middle class stuff. Sometimes when I was working class, I'd go into a middle class house and everybody'd be smiling and talking to each other, and I would get sick in my belly. It seemed the same as when my parents were having a fight, or when my friends would have a fight, except everybody was smiling and talking. I didn't know about verbal violence. They were underpinning each other verbally and cutting each other down verbally, very subtly. I wasn't verbally sharp enough to notice it with my ears, but I noticed it with my belly. I got confused, 'cause to my eyesight they were not fighting; to my body, they were fighting.

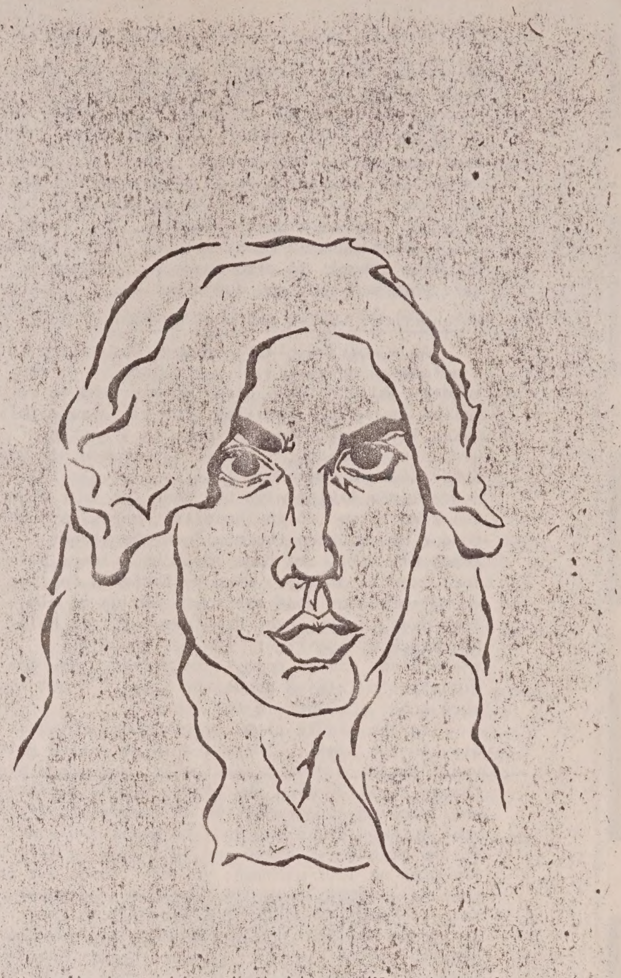
It worked the other way around too. Middle class people would come to my neighborhood or my house and not be able to think because people would be screaming or fighting.

Downward and Upward Mobility

Downward mobility is all right, and upward mobility is all right; it's two different things. It's hard to go up, but in addition, the women coming down give you a lot of flack about it. For example, I wasn't good enough 'cause I was working class, I was just scum, I didn't make the grade. You're not sure if you're talkin' right, lookin' right or actin' right. At the same time here's this woman who's middle class, decided it's groovy to be poor. It's groovy not to have material possessions. It's groovy to work forty hours a week, when I've been working forty hours a week for ten years. When I was 22, I didn't think it was groovy at all. I thought it sucked and I wanted out of it. I did not romanticize my past, my working. So there I am, finally getting it together to get myself in a place where I could have things, and she was telling me, "Oh, aren't you hep yet, it's not cool anymore to have things. Don't you know anything?" There's nothing more insulting and degrading to working class women than to hear that. It may be painful to middle class women, but they're still calling the shots; there's still a kind of condescension. Now they're telling us that it's feminist to not "make it big".

Another thing that starts to happen is you hear more and more about women beating each other up. My old lover, who's upper middle class, attacked me physically once; the first time she ever attacked anybody physically in her life. She was learning to be working class, she was learning survival reality. When she was pissed at me, she just attacked me.

Now I was learning verbal violence; I wanted to just talk about things. She'd say, "That's fucking shit" and she'd just want to holler and to punch out. I would say "But the real way is



to talk about things." She'd say, "But the real way is to express your emotions. I want to punch you, I'm really pissed at you." See, we both changed. A lot of women who are sliding in to being downwardly mobile are not realizing that they're picking up a lot of working class reality. My lover made a class analysis of that and said "I realize I'm downwardly mobile. Essentially I'm aspiring working class as much as you're aspiring middle class, and we're getting a lot of cross assumptions. I realize you don't want physical violence. Well, I don't want verbal violence any more either." We had to start to look at other ways to deal with violence.

Women, when they first start to get downwardly mobile still have their old way of loving women. They make bonds around people being intellectually stimulating, being fun to be with, people being a name person, a football player, star or something. Then all of a sudden they find they're making relationships based on what I was talking about earlier; based on survival. "I want people that are loyal," I hear that often. They think that they're making up a new definition for love, but essentially what they're doing is they're finding out the working class definition of love and saying "that's what real love

cont.

be working class. I wasn't taught to get ahead. I was taught not to read, not to excel in school; not to be one of them. I was taught not to be one of those authorities that think they know everything. Middle class people are often taught that education is an advantage; if they work hard, they'll be able to go through a lot of school and be a doctor someday. That means a lot of things; it means delayed gratification; it means school. It also means you believe in hard work and that you don't believe in luck.

Neighborhood system and nuclear family

As a working class person I was raised in a neighborhood system. I was raised in an extended family. Middle class people tend to be raised in nuclear families. The difference this makes is a very important one. In a working class neighborhood, I had me and my brother and other kids in the house all the time. In the house means living with us. When the lady down the street goes to the hospital, her kids come to our house. When the man down the street beats his wife, she comes over and sleeps here for a couple of days. When my father's beating up my mother or when she's beating up on him, I go over to Mrs. Lee, drag her over and help her break up the fight. Living is public; there's not enough room to be private. Now obviously I'm talking about the city, I'm not too sure about the poor in the country.

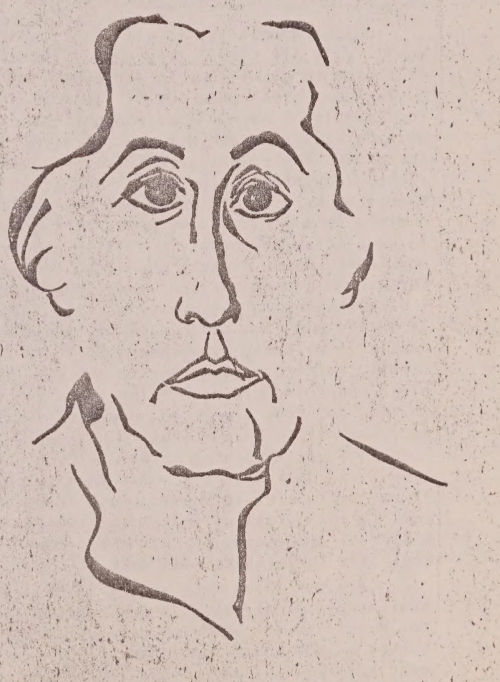
In the middle class neighborhood things stay in the family. There's a thing called privacy. In the middle class family, you often play things down. Keeping the status quo is important; keeping appearances up is important. If your husband beats you up, you don't run over to the neighbors' house and tell them to call the cops on your old man; you don't hide out at your neighbor's house. If you go to the hospital, you don't usually send the kids to the next door neighbor. If you need money, you don't usually ask the lady across the street. You hide your dirty laundry; there's room enough to hide your dirty laundry.

In a working class neighborhood if somebody says "I'm staying for dinner," you say "Wow, that's neat." You just put a little extra water in the soup, you put more potatoes in the stew. You feed whoever wants to stay and it's a compliment if they want to eat or sleep over at your house. In the middle class you invite people. They don't drop in.

Significant fears differ between the "extended family" and the "nuclear family." In Boston I lived in a Portugese neighborhood. The man and woman downstairs would fight a lot. She'd beat my ceiling with her broom and she'd get real pissed at me and she'd come upstairs and holler at me "You fuckin' bitch, I'm gonna kill you", in broken English and Portugese. She'd take the baseball bat and start banging down the door to bust it in to kill me. I was standing on the other side of the door hollering at her, telling her that she was a bitch. I said to her "You are crazy. I am going to have you committed and nobody will ever see your fuckin' face again." She just dropped the baseball bat and went downstairs. My mother could be chasing me around the house with a knife, and she'd get at me, draw the knife and I'd look her in the eyes and I'd say, "You are crazy." She'd drop the knife and cry. It's like a magic word. Women died in mental institutions. You can see getting a typical working class woman in a mental institution, she ain't never getting out. If she's violent at all, she ends up diagnosed as psychotic. Crazy is very scary for working class women. They know women that have been locked up and never got out of those mental hospitals. You don't want to be crazy because that means anybody can commit you and maybe nobody could get you out.

Violence

There's usually a lot more physical violence going on in the working class. This is not necessarily a rule. I'm afraid of violence myself. My mother cut up my father twice. Once with a knife and once with a cup. I've seen him have her pinned down on the bed. My brother would come home bloody every day from school. It's a whole thing in his education. He had to



is now." "Real love is when your friends will stand up for you when everybody else is hating you."

I'm starting to make middle class love relationships based on interests. People that I find intellectually stimulating. I'm starting to make relationships based on verbal support. They are relationships based on all kinds of new things, because for the first time I know I can take care of myself. I had insurance for the first time in my life last year. I never had insurance when I was a child. You know what that meant? If I got hit by a car, I could go to a good hospital.

That's all real stuff. I talked to some women in San Diego and they'd start telling me about their bonds. Essentially they're talking about a new society of women walking around in clans. What's that sound like? Doesn't that sound like what I've been talking about, about working class background. It's just a shift, that's all. It's not the new messiah or anything. I'm finding out about other things: books, discussion groups, getting your ideas down, getting them published and... just a lot of things new to me.

I'm learning to save. I save everything. I always save my money. I wouldn't be caught dead without money saved. If I didn't have money saved, I would just go out and do a couple of tricks and put some money in the bank. Downwardly mobile middle class women often don't save. A lot of them come from backgrounds where they know that if they're really down and out, there's money somewhere. I don't know that. If I don't pay for it, then who am I gonna go to for money?

It's not typical for me to be saving. It's not typical for downwardly mobile middle class women not to have a cent. We're shifting and changing. In a way, we're learning each other's realities; in a way we're hurting each other because we are not in the same realities. We're missing each other's good points a lot. If you say "You're Not Like Me, So You're Not Good", "what are you doing saving money?" or "you have money, why don't you buy the drinks" to somebody who's working, and you choose not to work, then you're missing each other.

Some downwardly mobile middle class women who are coming to a cultural event may say "I don't have any money." and ask for a discount. Whereas the working class woman that works 40 hours a week and makes $75 a week says "Oh, I've got plenty of money. I'll pay for this." She's the one paying because she's working.

Take the La Jolla Women's Center for example. It has in their brochure different classes which you can sign up for. They don't have on their brochure that you can exchange women energy for participating in the class, that you don't have to pay. What something like this does politically is that some of the women who look at the brochure call up and say "I can't afford it, can I come?" The women who say this are usually downwardly mobile middle class women. That's okay except that by not putting it in your brochure that you can come for free if you want, the only women that excludes are working class women because they are the only class of women who wouldn't think of asking.

I could go on and on but I think I've given you a start. Class is difference in attitudes and behavior, and the effect these differences have on our personal and movement interactions. Remember, these are very, very loose generalities. They help a lot and yet they cannot be held rigid. That's very important when we're doing class stuff, any kind of typology system; a system of viewing reality. ♀

WOMAN, LESBIAN, FEMINIST, CHRISTIAN

Nancy E. Krody

NANCY E. KRODY is Editorial Assistant of "The Journal of Ecumenical Studies" and Coordinator of the United Church of Christ Gay Caucus. This article is adapted from a longer statement appearing in the April-June issue of "Foundations."
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I AM A COMPLEX PERSON, as is every human being. Some of us integrate the contradictions of our lives better than others do; and some contradictions are tolerated in society, while others are judged insane. The contradictions in my life are that I am a woman, a lesbian, a feminist and a Christian. It is a complicated mixture; I struggle with it daily.

There are closet lesbians in the church and closet Christians in the lesbian-feminist movement, but very few open lesbians in the church. Some of us are unable or unwilling to remain in either "closet," and have opted for a "gay church," such as the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC), which consciously ministers to and with the gay community; we have found this a place where we can be whole people and not hide either our sexual orientation or our faith. But as I write, I personally know of fewer than 10 open lesbians in mainline Christian denominations. Where are the millions of other Christian lesbians? They have followed one of three patterns: They are still in the church, but closeted; they have left their mainline denomination for the Metropolitan Community Church or related movements; they have left the institutional church entirely. Let us look at each of these options.

The great majority of women who define themselves as lesbians do so only in the limited context of close friends, family or lovers—seldom in the context of neighbors, co-workers, or such authority figures as police, clergy, educators, bankers and government officials. To be "closeted," therefore, does not mean that a woman's orientation is known only to herself, but that she has revealed it selectively, each revelation depending on the reactions of those to whom she has opened herself previously. The most traumatic experience is often that of telling families, especially parents. In fact, a very useful kind of church counseling would be help to the families of gays as they go

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through this experience together.

Civil liberties legislation is one important need of closeted gay people. Nearly 40 cities have already amended civil rights legislation of the 1960's to protect gay people from discrimination in housing, employment, education and public accommodations. Given the economic position of women in the United States, and given that a lesbian by definition is not dependent on a man for the necessities of her life, her need for a secure job is of great importance.

But even with protective legislation, few lesbians are willing to announce their orientation to employers and colleagues. Jobs are hard to come by, and legal remedies are cumbersome and prolonged; the paycheck cannot be risked. Similarly, few want to face eviction from an apartment or rejection for mortgage credit from a homophobic realtor or banker. Simple prudence dictates that a lesbian keep her affectional preference to herself in the commercial world.

And in other worlds as well. Enough of us have been kicked out of colleges, universities and professional schools in the past two decades that our sisters will think twice before being open on campus or before listing gay organizational affiliations on applications to college or graduate school. In 1965, because I revealed my lesbianism, I was prevented from completing my seminary education. A United Presbyterian sister met the same fate in 1976, though the climate has changed enough in the past decade that she was able to transfer to another school.

The Church as Nonsupportive Community

What of the church? A cursory look at almost any Christian education curriculum, local church program or denominational budget will show that time, money, resources and energy are expended almost entirely on families rather than on "unattached" persons. Little attention is paid to the elderly, who often live alone with their memories or are consigned to an "old folks' home" where creeping senility is the rule and sexuality is viewed with distaste. Little attention is paid to the never-married, once they pass the "young adult" state. In more than one field work church I found that the youth fellowship came equipped with no-longer-young-adult tagalongs whose only fulfillment came from hanging around the kids in memory of those old happy times in their lives. These people do the unsung jobs around the congregation, but we seldom plan specifically for their needs, except as we attempt to find suitable mates for them in the "safety" of the church.

Woe to the lesbian who finds her "mate" in the church and wants to express her love as openly as her heterosexual friends express theirs. Suddenly she is an outcast and must be removed immediately from any responsible position; certainly she must not teach children or drive the youth to a skating party or sit on a church board. Instead she must keep her affectional preference wholly separate from her church life, only rarely sharing those experiences with her lover or, if both are in the same congregation, being absolutely circumspect when in others' presence.

The psychological toll this takes and the pain it introduces into a relationship are heartbreaking, especially when church spokespersons continue to preach about loving, caring, sharing, about personal wholeness and integrity. Worse than heartbreaking, because it engenders self-hatred, which is the experience of the gay person who listens year after year to homophobic utterances from the pulpit or church school class or from the governing body of his/her denomination.

A young woman who has perceived her lesbianism and is exploring what it means for her will be reluctant to turn to a pastor or other counselor who has said anti-gay things publicly or privately, or to one who has never publicly acknowledged any but monogamous heterosexual relationships as "normal" and valid. Official utterances and position papers to the contrary notwithstanding, the church may see fit to wink at adulterous pre- and post-marital heterosexual relationships, but it becomes outraged at the possibility of a loving, caring same-sex relationship.

Any lesbian who is in seminary or contemplating going to seminary should probably plan to be ordained without coming out, unless she is in a denomination whose ordination process is in the hands of a limited number of persons whose consciousness she has time and opportunity to raise.

For that matter, in most demoninations there are still pockets of opposition to the ordination of *any* woman, even in denominations that have ordained women for decades. Job openings for ordained women are no better than elsewhere in the work sector. When available, they are either on a multiple staff (almost invariably headed by a man) or in a small congregation that has trouble supporting any pastor adequately. The fishbowl existence of pastors makes any arrangement other than heterosexual marriage or celibacy extremely difficult, and the latter is viewed suspiciously because few people can imagine *themselves* living a celibate life.

Some of my ordained sisters have managed to live with a lover for "financial" or "companionship" reasons and have succeeded in allaying suspicion, but often it is at great personal cost and with a lack of real freedom to be themselves except when the doors are locked and the shades drawn, or when they escape on vacation. Always the fear is there that one day one will slip and say "we" when one should have said "I." To whom can you go when your relationship needs supportive counseling? *Not* to the bishop or conference president or area minister, and not to your "brother" pastor!

Needless to say, the lay person is no better situated. Rarely can a gay laywoman call on her pastor for help with a broken relationship. Unless she has a supportive circle of friends or is fortunate enough to be in a large city with nonjudgmental, experienced counselors available at a price she can afford, her only option may be the gay bar scene, where one has friends as long as one has money and where the bar is probably male-owned and may be controlled by organized crime.

Death to the Institutional Church?

Another lesbian pattern is to seek out a Metropolitan Community Church, or to attend meetings of the gay caucuses of the Episcopal and Roman Catholic churches that are large enough to have local chapters with weekly gatherings for worship, supportive sharing and socializing. But, just as in the larger gay community, the leaders and members of Integrity (Episcopal), Dignity (Roman Catholic) and the MCC

are predominantly male. There are local exceptions in all three groups, and the MCC has made progress toward training women pastors of real competence; but in general lesbian leadership is rare. Apart from this problem, however, these organizations have provided important spiritual outlets for lesbians who still want to be a part of the church and especially for those who have come either from a highly liturgical tradition or from a fundamentalist or Pentecostal tradition.

There are other denominational gay caucuses (in the American Baptist, Disciples of Christ, United Methodist, United Church of Christ, Presbyterian, Mennonite/Brethren, Unitarian, Lutheran, Evangelical—and Jewish—traditions), but these groups usually do not meet regularly enough to fulfill the need for worship. They concentrate on consciousness-raising and lobbying at all levels of the denomination's life, on providing support and information through newsletters, and they offer limited counseling and referrals.

Finally, we turn to the frequently chosen option for the lesbian who can no longer live within her church: She leaves it behind. Perhaps she will explore the growing experiences of women's spirituality, or stifle her own spirituality completely and declare herself an atheist if asked.

This, of course, is not only a lesbian phenomenon. Many feminists perceive, with Sally Gearhart, that traditional Christianity—with its male supremacy, its vested interest in the perpetuation of the nuclear family, its insidious support of sex-role socialization—is irreconcilably opposed to feminism and liberation. The church's commitment seems to be to subjugate women and annihilate "life-giving and life-sustaining qualities." They see the churches' moves to give women a piece of the pie—a few ordinations, a few committee and board jobs, a few language changes in the constitution of liturgy—as tactics to divide and conquer, to co-opt women into the system, silencing their demands for a total rebuilding of the church and its theology. For "reform" and "renewal" are tokenism and liberal cop-outs when the system itself is based on a vertical, hierarchical, authoritarian, competitive structure and theology.

With Sally Gearhart, these women call for the death of the institutional church: "If the gospel is to live, then the vertical structure will have to be laid on its side—horizontalized—and that, to me, means the death of the institutional church." "The sooner it dies, the sooner we can be about living the Gospel." "Personal integrity allows no other alternatives."

No lesbian or feminist in the church can ignore these words. "Is there life after birth?" the button asks. "Is there new life outside the church?" our sisters ask as they struggle with new forms and new theology. The world watches with joy or disdain, with hope or fear, with pride or loathing—but it watches.

Letting in the Light of Freedom

And I watch also, as I find myself searching for an answer to my own dilemma: to stay in the institution or to leave it, to leave it quietly or with a big bang, or to tear it down in order to rebuild the true church? Because for now I have chosen none of the options I've discussed, deciding instead to remain, as an open lesbian, within the institutional church.

I have known since I was seven years old that I was "different," that my primary emotional attachments were to other girls. I don't know what "caused" it, nor do I know what causes heterosexuality. I do know that either orientation is established very early in childhood, and that neither is contagious! Choice is involved only at the point of one's *expression* or *repression* of one's affectional preference; persons of either orientation may choose to be celibate or to enter into relationships with other persons. In such instances it is the quality of those relationships—not their nature—that should be of primary importance.

And yet we live in a homophobic culture, a culture in which we fear our own sexuality and same-sex relationships. In the long run this really is a fear of loving ourselves. It is played on by sex-role stereotyping—the forcing of boys and girls into "suitable" role models and expecting them to pair off at the appropriate age and carry out their adult familial functions. This, when the reality of human existence is that we all have both masculine and feminine characteristics; we all fall somewhere along a continuum of sexual preference on which we may or may not act overtly. We are not made to fix exclusively into either male or female boxes, and most of us suffer by being forced to do so.

The lesbian has opted out of this stereotyped role, out of "woman's place" and its dependence on men. She loves women; she does not necessarily hate men. She struggles in two worlds: She finds the world of women's liberation fearful of her; a lesbian on the line for the Equal Rights Amendment in Springfield, Ill. was ordered by the non-gay leaders to put down her sign reading "Lesbians for Equal Rights." And she finds the world of gay liberation can be as chauvinistic as the straight male culture. Lesbians are women-identified; we do not accept male definitions of us nor male control over our bodies. We find it far easier to give and receive love honestly in our situation, which for us is freer of power struggles than are male-female relationships in a male supremacist culture.

Lesbians and gay men are not discriminated against so long as we pass as "straight." But there is inner pain in this existence. We joke about the day when every gay person turns lavender and the world discovers how many of us there are. We are in every family, church and school, every town and city, every business, profession and political position; we are of every race, age, marital status and life style. Some of us have children and raise them just like anyone else. We live alone or with a lover, in a commune or with our families.

Gay people want what every other human being wants: the power to determine our own lives, to worship as we choose, to live, study and work to the best of our abilities, to pursue our happiness and to make a maximum contribution to society. We do not want tokenism or toleration, or paternalistic or maternalistic acceptance. We do want to be affirmed as persons created by God, for whom Christ died, who are full recipients of God's grace.

"Coming out," then, consists in affirming oneself as a whole, worthy human being, who in fact finds one's primary emotional and/or sexual fulfillment in relationship with another person of the same gender. It is to risk sharing who one is with another person. As we pull our closet doors off their hinges, letting in the light of freedom, we let in hatred and pain, but also love and joy. Being out is too precious an experience to want to go back again. And you find inner strength and the strength from your faith and community to help you exist "out there." In

fact, one occasionally wants to go to every pulpit, seminary chair, educational wing, organ loft, graduate school faculty, campus ministry and denominational office and drag our gay sisters and brothers out into the light of day to affirm who they are and to be gay and proud. But we will never reveal their identity, because each must decide in her/his own heart the time and place in which, and the people to whom, to come out. Meanwhile, each needs the support of trusted friends in and out of the church with whom to be open and to overcome the protective walls and masks we all construct.

"Coming out" is also to demand of the church that it affirm the broad spectrum of sexuality. As we read the story of Jesus with the woman at the well in Samaria, we discover that she admitted who she was to Jesus and *in that context* Jesus for the first time revealed himself as the Christ. Is the church able to be so open that it can bestow the gift of freedom on its gay members to affirm who they are? Can we be admitted to continuing dialogue within the church in concern for the full range of human sexuality?

Calling the Church to Be the Church

For too long, whites have decided what is best for the Third World peoples in church and society. Slowly, we are relinquishing some of our control and money to Third World leadership, allowing ourselves to listen to them address issues of concern to all human beings, rather than seeking to restrict them to consideration only of Third World issues. Will the church ever enlist the expertise of its gay members in a discussion of the full range of sexuality? Will it consider deficient any reports *about* homosexuality or any reports on marriage and family life if they have no input from gays or singles?

I stay in the church that has oppressed me and my gay sisters and brothers because I believe what is taught me about God and love and grace and redemption and justice. I want to see that church live up to its best self in God's name. So I am compelled to criticize it at the risk of becoming a victim of its homophobia. I must speak from inside its walls about what gay liberation has taught me about God and people and about love. My denomination will not listen to me if I speak from within the Metropolitan Community Churches or if I speak from outside the Christian community.

The church needs to be dealing with the affirmation of personhood, the integrity of peoples' lives, the wholeness of human relationships, and the realization of human potential, so that all may be in touch with God and one another and may be free to be themselves. Our constant concern about sexuality, our fear of it, our labeling it sinful and evil is un-Christian. We need to see our sexuality as an important God-given source of energy, motivation and strength in our whole lives.

Yet the church is unwilling to see sexuality in light of the Gospel. It pushes heterosexual monogamy but looks the other way when marital infidelity occurs or when marriages break down—in part because the nuclear family has been freighted so heavily with the responsibility to provide for all its members' emotional, psychological, physical and economic needs. The extended family, or the whole church as family, can better provide for these needs.

As an open lesbian in the church, I see myself as a bridge between lesbian-feminism and the church. It is the nature of bridges to be walked on, and I have felt a lot of footprints going in both directions! One can envision a bridge as it stretches over a stream, one "foot" planted on each side and oneself being split apart. This, too, is a feeling I share with other open lesbians and gay brothers in the church; for we in the gay caucuses of mainline religious bodies seek to minister to both church and world, and within each to gays, bisexuals and heterosexuals. As a result, we are assailed from all sides at every turn.

One day may bring an impassioned letter for help from a closeted gay Christian feeling the pain of remaining silent while gay people are excoriated by otherwise-loving church folk. The next day may bring a call to testify before an openly homophobic city council as it jokingly debates a civil rights bill that would affect 200,000 gay people in Philadelphia, testimony on behalf of the church that too often has undergirded just such homophobic government attitudes.

The next day might bring a call from a gay brother in a rural parish who wants to leave the ministry because the pain and hypocrisy of his closet are getting to be too much to bear. Or a call from a lesbian seminarian who I know will make a very good pastor, but only if she is able to be ordained and get a job without a pulpit committee knowing of her orientation; the dishonesty of it all is weighing her down.

Or I get a letter from a gay sister who left the church because she feels that it is oppressing the spirits of her gay sisters. She asks when I'll see the light and get out, giving my energy and love to my sisters instead of to the church that will never listen to me. And I muse about my secular and church history courses and remember that there was almost no mention of "herstory"—as if half the human race never even existed except as bearers for the men who *were* the stuff of history. I agonize over each of these brothers and sisters, sharing their pain, and I try to give some sense of comfort and understanding.

I daily reevaluate my role in the church. I need to continue to call the church to be the church, and so I stay and fight. But with Sally Gearhart, I affirm: "Every day the price of our staying and the price of our leaving must be calculated."

For those still in the closet out of fear of job or home or family situations, I offer my love and understanding, my empathy and support—and my hopes and prayers for your eventual liberation from the pain of hiding. I pray, too, for the liberation of those in the church who are blinded by homophobia and fear of sexuality that they may come to know, love and affirm their own beings and their gay brothers and sisters in the faith, that together we may seek God's will for our lives in this world.

Dom Helder Camara told of a Brazilian proverb when he spoke at the International Eucharistic Congress in 1976: "When we dream alone it is only a dream. But when we dream together it is the beginning of reality." God grant that we may dream and work together for a world of peace, justice, liberation and love for all.

Shalom. □

Alison M. Jaggar & Paula R. Struhl, Feminist Frameworks, McGraw, 1978.

itself, so the end goal of feminist revolution must be, unlike that of the first feminist movement, not just the elimination of male *privilege* but of the sex *distinction* itself: genital differences between human beings would no longer matter culturally. (A reversion to an unobstructed *pansexuality*—Freud's "polymorphous perversity"—would probably supersede hetero/homo/bi-sexuality.) The reproduction of the species by one sex for the benefit of both would be replaced by (at least the option of) artificial reproduction: children would be born to both sexes equally, or independently of either, however one chooses to look at it: the dependence of the child on the mother (and vice versa) would give way to a greatly shortened dependence on a small group of others in general, and any remaining inferiority to adults in physical strength would be compensated for culturally. The division of labor would be ended by the elimination of labor altogether (cybernation). The tyranny of the biological family would be broken.

And with it the psychology of power. As Engels claimed for strictly socialist revolution:

> The existence of not simply this or that ruling class but of any ruling class at all [will have] become an obsolete anachronism.

That socialism has never come near achieving this predicated goal is not only the result of unfulfilled or misfired economic preconditions, but also because the Marxian analysis itself was insufficient: it did not dig deep enough to the psychosexual roots of class. Marx was onto something more profound than he knew when he observed that the family contained within itself in embryo all the antagonisms that later develop on a wide scale within the society and the state. For unless revolution uproots the basic social organization, the biological family—the vinculum through which the psychology of power can always be smuggled—the tapeworm of exploitation will never be annihilated. We shall need a sexual revolution much larger than—inclusive of—a socialist one to truly eradicate all class systems. . . .

Lesbians in Revolt

Charlotte Bunch

The development of Lesbian-Feminist politics as the basis for the liberation of women is our top priority: this article outlines our present ideas. In our society which defines all people and institutions for the benefit of the rich, white male, the Lesbian is in revolt. In revolt because she defines herself in terms of women and rejects the male definitions of how she should feel, act, look, and live. To be a Lesbian is to love oneself, woman, in a culture that denegrates and despises women. The Lesbian rejects male sexual/political domination; she defies his world, his social organization, his ideology, and his definition of her as inferior.

Lesbianism puts women first while the society declares the male supreme. Lesbianism threatens male supremacy at its core. When politically conscious and organized, it is central to destroying our sexist, racist, capitalist, imperialist system.

Male society defines Lesbianism as a sexual act, which reflects men's limited view of women: they think of us only in terms of sex. They also say Lesbians are not real women, so a real woman is one who gets fucked by men. We say that a Lesbian is a woman whose sense of self and energies, including sexual energies, center around women—she is woman identified. The woman-identified-woman commits herself to other women for political, emotional, physical, and economic support. Women are important to her. She is important to herself. Our society demands that commitment from women be reserved for men.

The Lesbian, woman-identified-woman, commits herself to women not only as an alternative to oppressive male/female relationships but primarily because she *loves* women. Whether consciously or not, by her actions, the Lesbian has recognized that giving support and love to men over women perpetuates the system that oppresses her. If women do not make a commitment to each other, which includes sexual love, we deny ourselves the love and value traditionally given to men. We accept our second class status. When women do give primary energies to other women, then it is possible to concentrate fully on building a movement for our liberation.

Woman-identified Lesbianism is, then, more than a sexual preference, it is a political choice. It is political because relationships between men and women are essentially political, they involve power and dominance. Since the Lesbian actively rejects that relationship and chooses women, she defies the established political system.

Of course, not all Lesbians are consciously woman-identified, nor are all committed to finding common solutions to the oppression they suffer as women and Lesbians. Being a Lesbian is part of challenging male supremacy, but not the end. For the Lesbian or heterosexual woman, there is no individual solution to oppression.

The Lesbian may think that she is free since she escapes the personal oppression of the individual male/female relationship. But to the society she is still a woman, or worse, a visible Lesbian. On the street, at the job, in the schools, she is treated as an inferior and is at the mercy of men's power and whims. (I've never heard of a rapist who stopped because his victim was a Lesbian.) This society hates women who love women, and so, the Lesbian, who escapes male dominance in her private home, receives it doubly at the hands of male society; she is harassed, outcast, and shuttled to the bottom. Lesbians must become feminists and fight against woman oppression, just as feminists must become Lesbians if they hope to end male supremacy.

U.S. society encourages individual solutions, apolitical attitudes, and reformism to keep us from political revolt and out of power. Men who rule, and male leftists who seek to rule, try to depoliticize sex and the relations between men and women in order to prevent us from acting to end our oppression and

challenging their power. As the question of homosexuality has become public, reformists define it as a private question of who you sleep with in order to sidetrack our understanding of the politics of sex. For the Lesbian-Feminist, it is not private: it is a political matter of oppression, domination, and power. Reformists offer solutions which make no basic changes in the system that oppresses us, solutions which keep power in the hands of the oppressor. The only way oppressed people end their oppression is by seizing power: People whose rule depends on the subordination of others do not voluntarily stop oppressing others. Our subordination is the basis of male power.

Sexism Is the Root of All Oppression

The first division of labor, in pre-history, was based on sex: men hunted, women built the villages, took care of children, and farmed. Women collectively controlled the land, language, culture, and the communities. Men were able to conquer women with the weapons that they developed for hunting when it became clear that women were leading a more stable, peaceful, and desirable existence. We do not know exactly how this conquest took place, but it is clear that the original imperialism was male over female: the male claiming the female body and her service as his territory (or property).

Having secured the domination of women, men continued this pattern of suppressing people, now on the basis of tribe, race, and class. Although there have been numerous battles over class, race, and nation during the past 3000 years, none has brought the liberation of women. While these other forms of oppression must be ended, there is no reason to believe that our liberation will come with the smashing of capitalism, racism, or imperialism today. Women will be free only when we concentrate on fighting male supremacy.

Our war against male supremacy does, however, involve attacking the latter day dominations based on class, race, and nation. As Lesbians who are outcasts from every group, it would be suicidal to perpetuate these man-made divisions among ourselves. We have no heterosexual privileges, and when we publicly assert our Lesbianism, those of us who had them lose many of our class and race privileges. Most of our privileges as women are granted to us by our relationships to men (fathers, husbands, boyfriends) whom we now reject. This does not mean that there is no racism or class chauvinism within us, but we must destroy these divisive remnants of privileged behavior among ourselves as the first step toward their destruction in the society. Race, class, and national oppressions come from men, serve ruling class white men's interests, and have no place in a woman-identified revolution.

Lesbianism Is the Basic Threat to Male Supremacy

Lesbianism is a threat to the ideological, political, personal, and economic basis of male supremacy. The Lesbian threatens the ideology of male supremacy by destroying the lie about female inferiority, weakness, passivity, and by denying women's "innate" need for men. Lesbians literally do not need men (even for procreation if the science of cloning is developed).

The Lesbian's independence and refusal to support one man undermines the personal power that men exercise over women. Our rejection of heterosexual sex challenges male domination in its most individual and common form. We offer all women something better than submission to personal oppression. We offer the beginning of the end of collective and individual male supremacy. Since men of all races and classes depend on female support and submission for practical tasks and feeling superior, our refusal to submit will force some to examine their sexist behavior, to break down their own destructive privileges over other humans, and to fight against those privileges in other men. They will have to build new selves that do not depend on oppressing women and learn to live in social structures that do not give them power over anyone.

Heterosexuality separates women from each other; it makes women define themselves through men; it forces women to compete against each other for men and the privilege which comes through men and their social standing. Heterosexual society offers women a few privileges as compensation if they give up their freedom: for example, mothers are respected and "honored," wives or lovers are socially accepted and given some economic and emotional security, a woman gets physical protection on the street when she stays with her man, etc. The privileges give heterosexual women a personal and political stake in maintaining the status quo.

The Lesbian receives none of these heterosexual privileges or compensations since she does not accept the male demands on her. She has little vested interest in maintaining the present political system since all of its institutions—church, state, media, health, schools—work to keep her down. If she understands her oppression, she has nothing to gain by supporting white rich male America and much to gain from fighting to change it. She is less prone to accept reformist solutions to women's oppression.

Economics is a crucial part of woman oppression, but our analysis of the relationship between capitalism and sexism is not complete. We know that Marxist economic theory does not sufficiently consider the role of women or Lesbians, and we are presently working on this area.

However, as a beginning, some of the ways that Lesbians threaten the economic system are clear: In this country, women work for men in order to survive, on the job and in the home. The Lesbian rejects this division of labor at its roots; she refuses to be a man's property, to submit to the unpaid labor system of housework and childcare. She rejects the nuclear family as the basic unit of production and consumption in capitalist society.

The Lesbian is also a threat on the job because she is not the passive/part-time woman worker that capitalism counts on to do boring work and be part of a surplus labor pool. Her identity and economic support do not come through men, so her job is crucial and she cares about job conditions, wages, promotion, and status. Capitalism cannot absorb large numbers of women demanding stable employment, decent salaries, and refusing to accept their traditional job exploitation. We do not understand yet the total effect that this increased job dissatisfaction will have. It is, however, clear that as women become more intent upon

taking control of their lives, they will seek more control over their jobs, thus increasing the strains on capitalism and enhancing the power of women to change the economic system.

Lesbians Must Form Our Own Movement to Fight Male Supremacy

Feminist-Lesbianism, as the most basic threat to male supremacy, picks up part of the Women's Liberation analysis of sexism and gives it force and direction. Women's Liberation lacks direction now because it has failed to understand the importance of heterosexuality in maintaining male supremacy and because it has failed to face class and race as real differences in women's behavior and political needs. As long as straight women see Lesbianism as a bedroom issue, they hold back the development of politics and strategies which would put an end to male supremacy and they give men an excuse for not dealing with their sexism.

Being a Lesbian means ending identification with, allegiance to, dependence on, and support of heterosexuality. It means ending your personal stake in the male world so that you join women, individually and collectively, in the struggle to end your oppression. Lesbianism is the key to liberation and only women who cut their ties to male privilege can be trusted to remain serious in the struggle against male dominance. Those who remain tied to men, individually or in political theory, cannot always put women first. It is not that heterosexual women are evil or do not care about women. It is because the very essence, definition, and nature of heterosexuality is men first. Every woman has experienced that desolation when her sister puts her man first in the final crunch: heterosexuality demands that she do so. As long as women still benefit from heterosexuality, receive its privileges and security, they will at some point have to betray their sisters, especially Lesbian sisters who do not receive those benefits.

Women in women's liberation have understood the importance of having meetings and other events for women only. It has been clear that dealing with men divides us and saps our energies and that it is not the job of the oppressed to explain our oppression to the oppressor. Women also have seen that collectively, men will not deal with their sexism until they are forced to do so. Yet, many of these same women continue to have primary relationships with men individually and do not understand why Lesbians find this oppressive. Lesbians cannot grow politically or personally in a situation which denies the basis of our politics: that Lesbianism is political, that heterosexuality is crucial to maintaining male supremacy.

Lesbians must form our own political movement in order to grow. Changes which will have more than token effects on our lives will be led by woman-identified Lesbians who understand the nature of our oppression and are therefore in a position to end it.

AFFIRMATIONS

NEWSLETTER OF THE WOMEN'S THEOLOGICAL COALITION

Volume nine Number Five March-April 15, 1982

Dear Jesus Sincerely

by Margaret C. Souder ANTS

I've never known you
as you are
on your own
nor do I believe I can.
You are enmeshed in relationships
with the folks who knew you best
with folks who think they do
with those I know best.
We've journeyed together
that's sure true, but
my trip with you
cannot be separated from
other relationships I've known.
I'm not sure what that means
for who you are
on your own or
in my life.

There was a time
when I accepted you
along with many other oppressions:
Church
Marriage
The Pill
Isolation
Self-hate.
You seemed to provide some meaning then
but you were in my head,
an intellectual construct
constructed by others,
accepted by me.
You kept me in line
made life easier,
simpler,
less complex,
untrue.
I held on to you tightly then
I nearly lost myself.

The journey to Boston
and back to self
has meant divorcing oppressions.
It isn't easy.
Life lived openly
on the road to liberation
is full of joy
and much pain.
I looked at you
through many people's eyes
and as being a woman
became crucial
gave me power and meaning
a way to understand,
you faded out
of my mind--
the only space you'd had.

I rejected you in anger
one day
when pushed by one who speaks for you.
A certain freedom resulted.
My thinking cleared,
a creative spark flared.
I left you behind and did

Opinions represented in this newsletter are those of the individuals submitting articles and announcements; in no way are these opinions seen as representative of the Women's Theological Coalition or any of the nine Boston-area theological schools.

my best work.
But some defensiveness remained.
Seminary is a tough environment
in which to call you
an oppressor.
Just the other night
a real good friend
of mine
and yours,
who knows you rather than speaks for you,
freed me up again.
She gave me the space I needed
to be me
in relationship to her
apart from you.
Permission to not understand
how she knows you
and what you mean
to her.

So I've come back
for another look
without my anger
in an atmosphere of respect
to say hello and goodbye
to you:
tragic hero
sacrificed once and
used over and over,
oppressed and
oppressor,
provoker of my questions,
catalyst of my changes,
friend of a friend.

I've turned the ground over
and over
spaded it
fertilized it
and abandoned the plot.

Now I've returned
to plant some final seeds and smooth the surface
neaten the rows
and leave again.
What ever grows here
will do it alone
in the sun
and the rain.

--Robyn Somes

DISARMAMENT!

A potluck supper/meeting to prepare for the United Nations Special Session on Nuclear Disarmament demonstration/ celebration. All of the students from the nine Boston-area seminaries are encouraged to attend. The night will include music, an outline of events paralleling the UN SSD II which you might want to attend, reviewing our goals, making travel and lodging information available, organizing divinity school students participation, etc. The night is April 28 from 6-8 PM at the Red Pipe Room at Weston School of Theology.

For more information contact Nancy Alexander at 523-9548.

"Reaganomics--A Look at the Reality and the Alternatives" will be the topic of the dialogue led by Saundra Graham (state representative from Cambridge, chair of Massachusetts Black Legislative Caucus) and Robert Reich (Professor of business and public policy, J.F.K. School of Government), on May 4 at 8 PM at the First Parish, 3 Church St., Harvard Square.

"An Evening of Poetry and Song" with Suzanne Belote and Carole Bowman, on May 21 at 7:30 PM, 23 Dartmouth St., Boston.

two events...on the same weekend!!?

CLASS AND RACE CONSCIOUSNESS CONFERENCE AT SALEM STATE COLLEGE

The New England Women's Studies Association is sponsoring a Regional Conference entitled "Class and Race Consciousness" to be held April 16 and 17 on the campus of Salem State College, Salem, Massachusetts.

The Sixth Annual Conference will focus on race and class issues, and is open to the public.Some of the workshop titles are:

Developing Cooperative Stratègies on Class and Race Issues; The U.S. and US: American Behaviour Toward Foreign Students; In the Belly of the Beast: Class, Race and Sexism in a Secondary School Classroom; Women and Health Care; Reluctant Sisterhood: Captive Women in the Indian Wars; Women and the Churches; Videotaped Conversations with Pauli Murray on Family and Race Relations; Being Old In America: A Class in Itself; Black Students in the Nursing Profession; C-R Group for Jewish Women on Anti-Semitism and Racism; Cambridge Women's Oral History Project; Funded Programs for Minority and Disadvantaged Students in Higher Education; Role of Fantasy in Shaping the Direction of Societal Growth; Women and Alcohol: Class, Race, and Gender......

Keynote Address: June Jordan, poet, novelist, educator, and community activist.

For registration and fee information contact Dr. Alice Stadthaus, Interdisciplinary Studies, Salem State College.

To get to Salem State College: It is 18 miles north of Boston, at the junction of Routes 1A & 114. It is easily accessible by train from North Station in Boston, or by the Number 455 bus from Haymarket Square in Boston. Travel time is 50 minutes.

Wellsprings of POWER

WOMEN & FAITH

AN EVENT sponsored by the Women's Theological Center*

A journey to the sources of power and faith in the lives of women----through dramatic storytelling
--exploration of creative process
--personal reflection
--celebration

Resource Persons: SUZANNE BENTON, MARY HELEN WASHINGTON, ROSI OLMSTEAD, SARAH SMALL, TONI CHAMBERS, TRACIE ROBBINS, SHEILA VAUGHN, PAT OULETTE, MARTHA LEADER, KATIE TOLLES

April 16-17 at Emmanuel College 400 The Fenway
Boston, MA 02115

*The Women's Theological Center *Born of the hopes of women for a community of learning and faith that is both feminist and Christian**A context for reflection and action, theology and social analysis, for women from diverse racial, ethnic, economic, national and church backgrounds***An opportunity to build on personal and communal experience and skills in order to become more effective ministers and agents of social and ecclesial change***

March 26, 1982

How do we as feminists, as ethicists, as women concerned about religion, identify unethical practices? How do we find out about wrongful situations which need to be challenged, both in our academic work and in our personal lives? Most often it is from the less powerful, from those who suffer as a result of any particular injustice.

This has become clear to me as I reflect upon my experiences at Boston University School of Theology this year. The indictments of an unjust, and insensitive administration have come largely from those who traditionally hold little power in academic institutions: the students and the staff. Just this past week I watched as one quiet, hardworking staffperson courageously made a public witness to protest the favoritism and discrimination evident in the administration's treatment of the staff. In order to remain true to her faith and personal integrity, Ginny Hodson resigned her position at the school, but before she left she spoke out forcefully against the Dean's unfair practices.

From women such as Ginny we get not only information (about how people are being treated in a given institution) but also our strength. Ginny's righteous anger infused me with new energy to continue to struggle to make BU STh the kind of seminary it should be. Again, I am reminded that those who have the most to lose are those who fight the hardest to change oppressive situations. Those of us in privileged positions, working in academic settings, cannot afford to lose touch with these people.

Let us all look to women and men like Ginny Hodson for guidance, and for vision as we continue to work within our various churches and seminaries.

---Marianne Hachten, BU STh

HarvestPress/cpf

JUSTICE

June 25-27 noon to noon Georgetown University
Washington, D.C.

National Conference for Campus Ministry Women
"Gathering Energy for Justice and Healing"

Coming together to do Justice and Healing with:
GRETCHEN EICK ELIZABETH MCALLISTER
SUSAN SAVELL MAUREEN DOGGETT

HEALING

For more information write:
Delton Pickering
Baltimore Conference Council on Ministries
5124 Greenwich Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21229
(301) 233-7300

IV

The following are excerpts from the FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES ON THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION FORUM--- "PSYCHOLOGY." It was presented by the women faculty of the nine theological schools in the Boston area. It took place February 25 at Episcopal Divinity School. The tapes were transcribed by Carol Vogler, and are on file at the EDS library and the Anna Howard Shaw Center at Boston University School of Theology.

Carole R. Bohn (Lecturer, Pastoral Care and Counseling, Boston University School of Theology)

...(this) is not a theoretical issue for any of us, and if we try to keep it a theoretical issue we are going to get trapped; it's a personal issue that we have to deal with from a personal perspective. The way in which psychological theory, Freudian theory particularly, but also the subsequent major theories like social learning theory and cognitive developmental theory---the way in which those have shaped a view of who women should be in our society is extraordinary.... Some of you have, I'm sure, heard of the Broverman studies. Let me just mention them briefly for those who have not. (The Brovermans were) a couple who back in the early 70's did a study about mental health among professionals---all of the 79 subjects were mental health professionals. They divided them into 3 groups, and they asked the first group to identify characteristics of a healthy male. They gave them polarized items and asked them to say (aggression, passivity, so on) where a healthy male would fall on that spectrum. They had a whole set of categories like that. The second group they asked where a healthy female would be, and the third group they asked to say where a healthy adult would be. Now remember these are mental health professionals, not just people off the street, but people who are trained in mental health and who are doing psychological services with men and women. You might guess what the results of this study were. Healthy males and healthy adults had the same characteristics. To be a healthy male and to be a healthy adult wa s the same. But to be a healthy female was different, (with) a whole different set of criteria. To be a healthy female in this society meant to be more dependent, more passive, and all those kind of stereotypic views that we have developed of women...out of a psychoanalytic, Freudian theory, which says that when women discover their sexuality they realize that they are missing something and that they are inferior and therefore they go through life trying to make up for the fact that they don't happen to have what they see men have, namely a penis.

That women therefore are receptive rather than intrusive-and think about what that means in terms of the way women develop---that women are supposed to be receptive, passive, taking on things. Think of the way in which we take on things for other people, in which we take on other people's feelings, in which we take the responsibility for how others--particularly men--are going to feel and respond to things...I don't mean (this taking care of others) only in a physical, material sense, but...emotional....

The process of moving through that is really very painful - living with the tension of allowing for the conflict. I think that for many of us it's really hard to live with conflicting feelings, and I think that goes beyond our experience as women, but it is a real human experience....we want to think that things are going to be black or white, one way or another---that I make a decision and I'm going to feel clean about it....

...we have a lot of trouble living with conflict and generally what we try to

do with that is repress all of the conflicting feelings on the lesser side so that we can really build up the stronger side, and then we can feel resolved and clean about whatever it is we're doing. In fact, I think that most of what we do leaves us with conflicting feelings and certainly the process of growth that we go through as women struggling with the reality that I've just described -- it is full of conflict and pretty fearful as well, because it really means changing things at their very root.

At the opening session of this series we had a lot of people from different disciplines speaking - some of you may have been there then - and I compared the process of women developing consciousness to the Kübler-Ross stages of death and dying. I want to expand on that just a little bit tonight, and reflect with you about that as we think about what happens with women who begin to realize that the definiton that has been provided for us by standard psychological forms and by our society is inadequate - does not express our experience and in fact is limiting and detrimental and sinful.

The first thing that I think happens is that most of us have said(or do say) is, "What do you mean, I'm not oppressed," and "don't bother me with this foolishness, I'm not oppressed," stage. "My daddy was a real nice guy and he treated me just fine and my husband is a nice man and I have nice friends...(this) does not have anything to do with me." It's painful, it's scary, to think that it does. And we don't like to live with conflict.... Once the realization comes to us that maybe there is something going on that is not the way we would like to believe, then I think we move into the "well, maybe I'm a little-bit-oppressed" stage, but not too much because "I still have these very nice experiences with my father, my husband, my brother...I might have had a little experience with it here and there but, just a little bit.... The only place to go from "I'm a little-bit-oppressed" is "I'm more oppressed" and then "Wow, I am really stuck and I'm damn mad stage." That is a very painful place to be, not only for us but for our male friends and colleagues. A lot of the anger that we have kept inside over years and years and years begins to explode. What often happens then is that all of the old myths about women as hostile angry mean bitches comes back....

One of the things that I think is very real about the experience of men and women in the way that we live in our culture is that for most, women are the primary caretaker. The first intimate experience that we have is with another woman. Then at some point in our lives we are told that now we must begin relating to some man and we don't know how to do that because our initial experience has been in a close relationship with a woman. We feel the loss of that relationship and we always then feel somewhat afraid of losing that intimacy and that closeness.

For men it is a different kind of experience, and equally difficult. The close, caretaking, first intimate relationship for most men is with a woman, and then at some point in their lives they are told, well, you really should relate to some other woman... (they)have to put (themselves) in the control of another woman.

What I have found in my work with people in therapy - men and women --is that most women are dealing with some kind of issue that has to do with fear of abandonment and loss. Most men are dealing with some kind of issue of control, fear of being controlled. That is a kind of sweeping generalization...but it has been very much my experience that that is what I see pervasive, and I think that that does come from the kind of life experiences that we've had and it makes it particularly difficult then when we begin to confront the realities...women particularly become angry at the realization of what has happened, but also are afraid of being abandoned

- afraid of losing close and intimate relationships. (It) creates all kinds of incredible dynamics, and I would really be interested in hearing some people who speak from a lesbian perspective to talk about how that might be different for them. I wonder what the basic differences might be if one is establishing a close and intimate relationship with another woman, if the issues of separation and loss are as strong. But I think that they are there for all of us in some ways and they get wound up in our anger and our fear of what is going to happen to us.

...(The next stage) when we are spent at being enrage, when we just can't be angry anymore. Then we move into the "how can I live with this reality?" stage...."How can I live with this. My anger has not changed anything. In fact, if it has it has alienated some people and left me feeling more alone so then I feel lost and alone and depressed....

But I think there is some power in the process of naming the demon, of gaining some awareness of what has been going on...we are asked to move into a period of change, of integration, not of acceptance in the way that Kübler-Ross tàlks about it but of integration of our experiences so that we can begin to bring about some real change in our own lives....In my perception of myself and how I move in that structure and what I bring to it - that's where I can bring about some change, and that is where I think the process, the growth process, of feminization can help me to engage in change.

Sharon Lea Parks (Professor, Developmental Psychology and Faith Education, Harvard Divinity School)

As I was reflecting on what I might wish to share tonight as we gathered together around the theme of Women and Psychology, it didn't take me very long to know the heart of what I would like to share. It has two parts. The first is to share with you the work of a friend, colleague and mentor - one that I would assume many of you have heard of...Carol Giligan. I think that Carol's work - sort of stunning in its simplicity - is very suggestive for all of us. (She) had been working here at Harvard as a part of the group of folk who were gathered together around the work of Larry Kohlberg....in the work that he did he identified the theories of stages that a person goes through in moral decision making. Now... all of his studies (were) with men initially - with boys and then men because of course that would be adequate in making assumptions about how all persons do their thinking and reasoning. So, unfortunately, the problem with developmental work is that it takes generations to do longitudinal studies...he had started out with a sample of all men and then feminist consciousness came along and all of a sudden his sample was inadequate but the study was marching along year after year after year.

And so Carol, working in this context, recognized two primary criticisms of the Kohlberg work - as important as it has been, as informing as it had been as a pioneering work... The study was with all men. The second problem... was that his study had been done by asking people what they thought would be appropriate or inappropriate behavior in hypothetical situations....

So Carol said alright let's do two things. 1) let's interview women and 2) let's interview women who are involved in actual, real moral decision-making. Well, it happened in all this that women tended to be either stage three or five. (The third stage is characterized by deciding what is right and wrong on the basis of the quality of interpersonal relationships involved: "I don't want to hurt this person because they are my friend." Stage four has to do with thinking systematically, what is good for the society: "This is a very nice person, but if we make

an exception in this case there'll be problems..." The fifth stage one is able to hold together both the interpersonal and the collective need and be able to make decisions in that complexity.)

(Women) never came out(stage)four,or if they did they tended to be women in the military or in law, and if you interviewed them long enough they would say, "Well, do you want to know what I really think?" And so, given this study, she made arrangements to work with abortion clinics where women were coming in the midst of having to struggle with a very intense and particular moral decision...She would sit down with these women and have an extended conversation with them about their decisions and at the end of that conversation she would give them her phone number. She was sensitive to the fact that...in many cases she was the only person with whom they were having that kind of conversation at that time. She said once, "I have entered their life, I have to ask what the implications of that are."

...any psychology which has suggested that men should fear being connected or that women should fear standing alone is a psychology that has robbed both of the sexes of adequate theoretical perspectives on our own becoming....let me refer just briefly to another developmental theory which is having some power at the present time. That is the work of Daniel Levinson who has written a work Seasons of a Man's Life. He did his work more recently, and he has named his book accurately- it is seasons of a man's life. He studies 40 men and has nothing to say about women.... these theories are powerful and women start to look at them and wonder if it is exactly descriptive of themselves.....

I think (psychology) is a field that women should be very wary of going into professionally, because I think that to the degree that women culturally are asked to stay in the interpersonal world and let that be the sphere of being, of expertise and so forth, that women sort of bandage everyone up after they have been out in the "real" world doing "real" work. I think that psychology is a way of women putting their professional energy into a context where we can be addicted to loving, addicted to that caring role in a way where we help people cope, and we stay out of the political sphere.

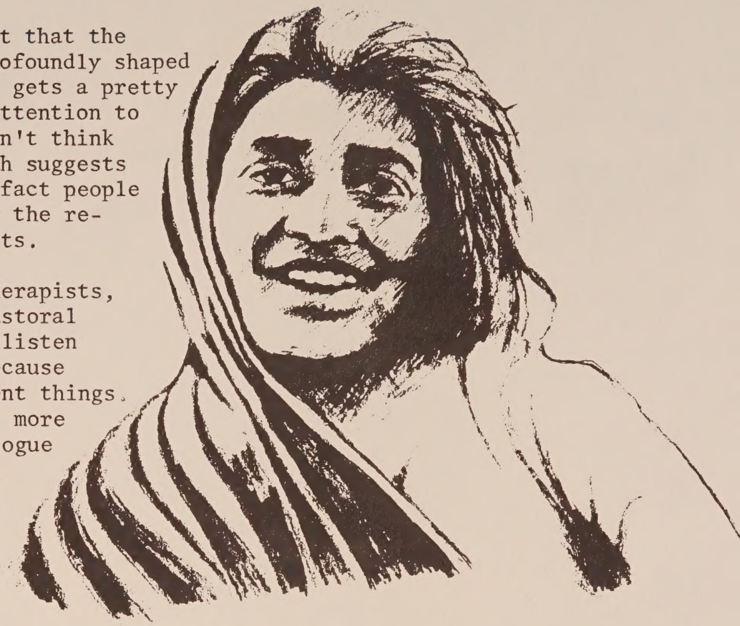
Now, having said that, I would say the reason why women should go into psychology is that psychology needs to become psycho-social theory. That if in fact we give particular attention to context, then women need to be in psychology, helping us to get out of the kind of psychology that is finally individualistic, personalistic psychology which treats people in fact as isolated individuals in private therapy to return to the same old system which is determining everybody and putting them on the couch...

I would say that this is one of the ways in which psychology and the needs of ministry become linked. We have problems in...pastoral care and counseling...in our movement for being more adequately informed by the field of psychology, we have bought in - I think - too much to the "one on one" clincal model. The power of the pastoral role down through history is as a person who stood in community and who knew the whole community and could help to enable the healing, nurturing community, a context in which people could live and thrive. If we are to be in psychology, if we are to be in psychology as those who understand ourselves in ministry, I would hope that it means that we have that kind of attention to context.

In terms of our scholarship, our theoretical works, I would hope that it means that we indeed might give fresh attention to relationships. It is not hard to

find psychologies which suggest that the personality in formation is profoundly shaped by the mother, and usually she gets a pretty bad description. Or to give attention to the power of the father. I don't think we have enough psychology which suggests what I think I hear - that in fact people have been profoundly shaped by the relationship between their parents.

...(therefore) we need therapists, we need clinicians, we need pastoral counselors; we need those to listen who are both men and women, because to some degree we hear different things. (For things to change we need) more women who are in profound dialogue with the psychological family.



Bessie Chambers (Professor, Pastoral Theology, Episcopal Divinity School)

...So I can not only validate the theories that ... women and men have just accepted and the fact that research has been given out by a certain set of men and then adapted to men and women. Both men and women have swallowed the theories and I'm with Carole that we're just on the beginning of development psychology and so what I am most interested in, and my interest is that each one of you (and myself) keeps discovering where our ongoing journey is leading. But I think that it takes a tremendous amount of integrity.

But I think when we know that what has come before us is not right - in other words others definition of us is not true: all women are not emotional wrecks... all women are not Gentile, all women are not fading violets,... (But) how do you go about discovering yourself?...figure out what did you like best about what Carole (and Sharon) said; what hit home with you? Why did it hit home with you?

It hit home with you because it is saying something particularly about you - not any other woman in the room but about you.... keep looking at experiences ...what happens in lectures that strike you? What are the books that hit you? Don't find out what the other person thought so you know what you should think. What is it that's going on in you and why do I feel that way?...This is (the) silent, quiet, inward journey that each one of us has to go on and it will be different than anyone else's....

I think we have a tremendous gift to give to men, and I think we have given only when we can own who we are and that's not just at one shot. We keep doing it but we don't need to get it from others. We need to get it from ourselves...

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Ragona

MOTHER EAGLE REVIEW

May 1977

On April 16 the NOW Task Force on Sexuality sponsored a spring conference, "Woman to Woman: Building a Community." Barbara Gittings gave the keynote address to nearly 250 lesbians, the first time in recent years that the Washington lesbian community has attempted on a large scale to include all segments of the community. MCC-DC participated in several ways: An MCC advertisement was placed in the conference program, several women attended the sessions and the dance that evening, at which "Rum Boogie" (a terrific Baltimore lesbian band) played. Jennie Bull was one of the workshop co-leaders. "Our Spirituality, Our Selves" was led by Bull and Juanita Weaver, who is editing an anthology on feminist spirituality. Of the 25 women who attended the workshop, ten requested further information about MCC, Mother Eagle Review, and <u>Feminist Views of Christianity</u> (a study guide and reader to be published by Mother Eagle Press.)

This conference was a first step for MCC-DC women in communicating with the women's community. At a recent meeting with Elder Freda Smith during the congregation's spiritual renewal in March, the women of MCC-DC decided that one of their major goals should be to spread the word about MCC in the women's community through participation in various women's events. All too often women will come to MCC, find it welcoming (although women are still definitely in the minority), and then fail to return to friends and groups to let them know that MCC welcomes women. Some MCC women attending the conference commented that many women present had never even heard of MCC and many assumed it was a "men's church." These women tried to stress that they found MCC open to women, and in fact find men in MCC-DC especially eager and friendly to welcome new women.

Presentations at the spirituality workshop led by Bull and Weaver revealed some basic assumptions shared by feminists in MCC and other lesbian feminists. These assumptions focus on the basic alienations and tensions that must be overcome in our culture if we are to be whole. Although the methods differed, the messages and issues presented by the MCC and the feminist spirituality speaker were similar. Basic tensions between the Western Judeo-Christian tradition and feminism are as follows:

- other-centered focus of traditional Christianity vs. woman-identified focus of feminism;
- traditional Christian view of pride as the ultimate sin vs. feminist view of self-hatred as the ultimate sin;
- the traditional duality and alienation between mind and body (and symbolically between the spiritual and natural, light and dark) and hence between male and female vs. the feminist stress on wholeness and oneness of mind and body.
- hierarchical, linear structure vs. circular, cooperative structure.

Metropolitan Community Church addresses these important alienations and tensions in preaching its message to all people and in challenging traditional Christian views: In MCC there is an emphasis on self-love and self worth. As gays, we are accepted as healthy and whole people. Because MCC is ecumenical, there is room for many beliefs (there is not one rigid "line" of belief required), and that gives room for

cont'd on pg. 7

STUMBLINGBLOCKS

Romans14:10-22

The scripture we heard this morning was from a letter written by Paul in response to a controversy between Jewish and Gentile Christians in Rome. Those coming from a Judaic background still practiced many of the traditional teachings such as not eating certain foods. They saw Christianity as just an extension of Judaism which did not alter any of those teachings.

These Jews felt quite strongly that Gentile Christians had to accept and practice the Hebrew customs in order to truly become Christians. The Gentiles couldn't identify with this tradition so there was unrest in their churches, there were those who were staying outside of the church because of this tradition or because of the lack of following it.

Paul made a very broad statement to settle this controversy, "Do not put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother or sister. If your sister or brother is being injured by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love." In other words, the most important concern is not specific practices of being a Christian but having a loving enough attitude toward all people and their idiosyncrasies to adapt our practices to make it possible for all people to know the loving of God in Christ; having a loving enough attitude not to interfere with anyone's ability to know and identify with Christ. We are all at different places, and in order to reach a person with the message of salvation, we must first know where that person is and adapt an approach so our message will be heard.

Paul was standing on very firm ground when he made his statement, when he minimized tradition, even revered tradition. Paul knew well Christ's teachings. He knew the emphasis Christ put on love of God and neighbor above all else. Paul was very familiar with such words of Jesus as we find in Mark 7.

Nancy Avard

Jesus, in this passage, is denouncing what had become the practice of following the letter of the Law of Judaism, and which had become just so much tradition. Jesus said, You leave the commandment of God and hold fast to the tradition of people." Christ was saying that the interpretation and tradition of these laws were the doings of humans and human beings had left behind the commandment of God, the spirit of the Law. What was that commandment? that spirit?

If we study these passages carefully, we find that Jesus ultimately rejected the Torah and replaced it with the spirit of love; no longer does eternal life depend upon excellence of deeds or lifestyle but on a loving spirit, on the faith and belief in Christ that that spirit engenders. Jesus in doing this was once again being the greatest radical who has ever lived. Jesus, time and time again, rejected the traditions in which he, himself, was raised.

Jesus did not stand for the status quo, the way it's always been done; Christ stood for change.

Does this say anything to us? Have we or do we put stumbling blocks in the way of our brothers or sisters? Do we insist on following tradition rather than being the innovators of change?

The answer to one or all of these questions for each of us is Yes! There are many women who should be part of our family of believers who aren't because of the traditional sexist language of many of our scriptures, hymns, prayers, liturgies and sermons. This language, this traditional male-oriented interpretation of the Bible makes them feel they are not important, that women were not intended to be part of Christ's followers because they are not "man", "mankind","brothers", "fathers," "sons." They cannot identify with a male God and male resurrected Christ. There are men and women in our church who do not feel fully included, who do not fully identify with the meaning of our services because of the language; because of the male-oriented interpretations; because of the emphasis on a male God. There are people who cannot or who have difficulty identifying with a Father-God because they never knew a father, or had a weak, mean, or abusive father.

cont'd pg 6

The Pearl of Great Price

MER is proud to be the first to publish the following address, given by Carter Heyward at an April conference on Gay Women and the Church at Andover Newton Theological School. Rev. Heyward is one of eleven women ordained to the Episcipal priesthood in 1974.

A paraphrase of Matthew 13:45-46:"Going with God is like unto a woman seeking goodly pearls; and having found one pearl of great price, she went and sold all she had, and bought it." The parable of the pearl of great price: a woman seeking pearls -- pearls -- something in which to invest herself, connectedness between self and other that is meaningful, something good; and having found one pearl of great price -- something extraordinary in which to invest herself, a connectedness or relatedness of uncommon meaning, something more than "good," something uspeakably fine, she went and sold all that she had, and bought it. She sells all -- all other pearls, all connections, relationships, dependencies, and buys the pearl of great price. She divests herself of all else, and invests herself wholly in that one special pearl, that one extraordinary relationship of uncommon meaning. Such is it like, going with God, who sells the pearl, who is in the pearl, who is the pearl.

I have come here tonight to speak to you on Lesbianism, specifically on the situation of Lesbians, homosexual, or "gay" women in the Church. An issue, an experience, an existential process of being and becoming among women who are going with God and who, in so doing, are participating, knowingly or unknowingly, in the shaking of the foundations of the Christian Church: its theology, its ethics, its liturgies and polities, its structures. I see through a glass darkly that Church foundations are being shaken so passionately, furiously, and unrelentlessly by the issue of "sexuality" by those of us who care that we who care will, within the next few decades, find either that we have given in to ecclesiastical anguish and made peace with an institution whose ways are not ours; or that we have departed the ecclesiastical institutions rather than sell the pearl of great price; or that the Church itself -- through words and action -- will have been, and will still be, in a process of a radical divesting of itself from ancient theological and ethical and political "norms" in order to invest itself in the on-going, creative being with God, who is Godself the source, the giver, the essence of all that we name as "sexual."

I know myself to be a person, like all persons, essentially defiant of categories. I remember myself as a child, who like all children, lived with a wisdom -- Sophia -- with an imaginary playmate, in fact, named "Sophie Couch" -- whom I outgrew. My experiences, buoyed by my imagination, knew few categories or lines of clear demarcation between "who I was" and "who I was not," or between the values of being a human, an animal, or a plant as member of God's creation. I was not bound early, or easily, by such categories as "White" and "Black," "child" and "adult," "male" and "female," let alone by such enigmatic and arbitrary concepts as "masculine" or "feminine." Only later, much later, was I to learn and inwardly digest the teaching that such boundaries and categories are crucial to one's sense of self and identity; that in order to be my healthy, and holy, self I must be clear on who and what I am, category by category, and I most certainly must be clear on my own being as distinct from yours and must be clear that I am distinct and separate from those whose categories I do not share. Such clarity manifests itself in the the strong ego, the stable personality, the normal individual -- and any lack of such clarity manifests itself in the disintegrated, pathological, and/or abnormal self. And the categories were abundant, and my clarity was keen:I was Christian, white, refined, good, smart, talented, female, and with God's help, very, very "feminine." My wise little friend, Sophie Couch, had long since departed with my imagination, and there I was, age 13, within a stone's throw of becoming the All-American girl, cheerleader, class president, debutante, Who's Who, Dean's List, church leader,

Girl Friday to the clergy, and, someday, the wife of a priest and the mother of his sons.

Many secret-crushes-on-strong-women-and-men later, people in whom I yearned for reunion with Sophie Couch; many offices, honors and awards later; many pastors, counselors, and therapists later; several proposals for marriage later; many years of clarity and confusion, thrills and heartbreak, moments, days, weeks, and months of running fast to some goal and even faster away from it; 10,12, years of searching for goodly pearls, some sense of connectedness, relationship, that made sense to me and of me, I found tucked away deep within me, waiting for me to rediscover,my soul; and therein, my Sophie Couch soaring imaginatively through my being, towards all that has been, all that is, all that will ever be, within me, beyond me, around me, an awareness of my own relationship to all members of creation. The essential me, both unique in all the world and involved, organically, essentially, and inextricably in the living and dying of all persons and creatures. I found myself. My soul. My being in relationship to One -- God -- who holds and moves us all, together. The pearl of great price. The relationship to God, and all, that is at once that which we call "spiritual" and that which we call "sexual." And there was no way, and there is no way, for me to know "sexuality," then, as that fundamental human yearing for meaningful relationship without knowing that, to the extent that I am yearning for meaningful relationship with people who are men, I am yearning sexually for men; and that to the extent that I am yearning for meaningful relationship with people who are women, I am yearning sexually for women. To the extent that I am open to, and yearning for relationship with God, or with people, or with other aspects of creation, I am alive and yearning sexually -- period. For it is not just with my intellect, or with my emotions that I year, but with myself -- every bone in my body, every nerve under my skin, every orifice in my being, everything that I am -- that I reach out; and take in, and give out, and hold onto, and let go, and move with, whether in bed with a lover, on my knees in prayer, in class with students, at the altar in Communion, or romping with my dog. And so, that is me, one in whose life, categories merge: spirituality and sexuality are one; homo- and heterosexuality are one; and that which we name "divine" is also that which we name as "human" when I, or any person, reaches out for meaningful relationship. It seems to me that we are indeed talking about Incarnation and Atonement, God-with-us, yearning to be born again, and again, and again, in relationship within, between, and among us.

Christian tradition has, in no small way, undercut our capacity for yearning. For yearning implies some unknown One for whom we yearn, an almost unintelligible quest for meaningful relationship; and Christian thought -- hence the Church itself -- has, from its early days attempted to locate, define, and map out the way to, God. Hence, the on-going war that the Church has waged against various heresies, agnosticism, practices, and even questions of Yahweh, our God and Father: God is not darkness, God is light. God is not death, God is life. God is not irrational, God is rational. God is not Mother, God is Father. God is not of the flesh, God is of the Spirit. God is not sexual. God is spiritual.

In each and every case, "God" is in, whatever those who have done the defining in a patriarchal religion/culture perceive to be, essentially, that which is in control of some other. Hence, God, in light, overcomes darkness; God, in life, conquers death. God, rational Logos, brings order to chaos and irrationality. God, in Spirit, is stronger than the flesh. God the Father penetrates and uses, at his will, the mother -- earth -- female recipient of the Father's initiative. And spirituality becomes the strongest weapon at our disposal against death, darkness, chaos, woman -- and sexuality,all of which have been defined, implicitely or explicitly, throughout the history of the church as "evil" -- those powers that contravene, and must be subdued, by that which is "Good" -- God. I would suggest that the institutional Church's collective fear of, terror at, sexuality -- a fear that we ourselves have been immersed in, and perhaps still are -- is hardly less than our fear of death, the final and absolute phenomenon which is beyond our control.

I offer these observations by way of suggesting that ecclesiastical anxieties about sexuality are formidable, and that we who ask that church polity and theology be re-formed toward clebration of women and of sexuality are, in fact, requesting, or demanding, that an entire cosmic consciousness

be raised and opened to its own revolution. It is no wonder that at least 50,000 women were burned as witches between 13 and 1800, usually for sexual offenses. It should have been expected that the UCC would go into institutional convulsions over the ordination of Bill Johnson, and that the Bishop of New York whould be subjected to greater abuse after his ordination of Ellen Barrett than he received either after controversial civil rights advocacy or as he ran through the streets of Saigon. It is much more amazing that you and I would believe that we can help bring significant, creative change in the institutional attitude and action woards homosexuality. But here we are, believing either that we can do something, or that something must be done by someone, or at least wondering what is happening and what we think of it. And I would only say clearly before moving into the situation of Lesbians in the Church today, that we who do believe that change can happen and that we must participate in it will suffer much and long, whether we call ourselves "gay" or "straight" or "bisexual," whether we are single or married, older or younger. Hence, our commitment and efforts depend solely on how much we value the pearl of great price.

. . . I believe that while the differences between the experiences of gay men and gay women are derivative of the different sex-roles and expectations in which women and men have been steeped, the commonality gay women and gay men share is that all of us are yearning for meaningful relationship in a society in which we are absolutely forbidden to seek and find such relationship with members of our own sex. The situation that gay women and gay men share is difficult enough outside the boundaries of institutional religion. Witness the Anita Bryant campaign in Miami; the fight and plight of Sgt. Matlovich; of Lesbian mothers; and of gay women interrogated and jailed by Grand Juries. Within the Church itself, the situation is made more difficult, for not only do we contend with the norms of "civil religion" as these standards of sexual morality are strong and effective both within and without the Church, but moreover, the entirety of the Church's theology and structure is held fast and firm by the ancient proscription against sex-outside-of-marriage as destructive, evil, and sin against God. Then too, church law is rooted musch more deeply than civil law in its ban against adventuring into the unknown, the uncontrollable. And so, while in the secular arena of our corporate life, women and homosexuals -- though far from liberation -- do increasingly have civil law on our side, step by step, the sacred arena of corporate life --institutional churches -- are likely to fight to the death attempts at significant advocacy of women and homosexuals and are bound to try strangling, with canon law, every effort of women and gays toward active, lively, and celebrative expressions of who we are.

I will go so far as to suggest that while the churches have led at times, and still do at times lead the way, toward justice in society as a whole, the Church, vis-a-vis its institutional leadership, will be the last to venture into a celebration of sexuality as good and right. So strong is the historic and theological mandate against sexuality...and against women, perceived in preconsciousness as the bearer of sexuality to man.

In every happy Lesbian, the church is encountered by a woman who has said no...to marriage and yes to all that which has been traditionally defined as chaotic, irrational, mysterious, unknown, uncontrollable -- yes to women.

Lesbians, unlike gay men, thus bear the burden not only of being homosexual in a church in which sexuality is held to be evil, sex outside of marriage indefensible, and homosexuality itself perverse; but moreover of being female in a church in which woman has long borne the psychic/theological/ and symbolic burden of beint that which is-- by definition -- chaotic, irrational, mysterious, unknown, uncontrollable, deadly, sexual...

In every happy Lesbian, the church is encountered by a woman who has said no, in some way, to the traditional marriage; yes, to her own body and to sexuality itself; and yes to that which has been traditionally defined as chaotic, irrational, mysterious, unknown, uncontrollable -- yes to women.

Hence, Lesbianism is for Christian-consciousness-untransformed an implicit and bold "NO" to the God that is contained within the categories of light, logos, and Father. The unrepentant Lesbian, by her very being -- proud and gay -- is a sign of new religion, new consciousness, new faith, in which there is no patriarchal authority and no space for male definition of who or what woman is, should be, or will be.

This much we should remember -- whether or not we who are Lesbian intend to signify such transformation; whether or not we want to signify such change. The fact of the matter is that regardless of how orthodox her very being, if she is happy and bold about herself, is a threat to the undoing of the Christian Church as we know it...

We should not take lightly the ramifications of who we are, but rather must live into these ramifications, both for the sake of our own souls and for the sake of the Christian Church, if we are indeed -- wittingly or unwittingly -- about its own/ our own thoroughgoing transformation from male, heterosexual, anti-sexual space to that space which is simultaneously human and divine, spiritual and sexual. What might our tasks be?

To cultivate ourselves as people open to, and growing within, a yearning for meaningful relationship -- relationship with God and with one another, female and female, female and male, male and male, relationship of mutual respect, freedom, and love for the very process of yearning that takes us always into unknown spaces, within, between, and among ourselves. It is not easy to live with such integrity, but I believe it is impossible to live without it.

To express thoughtfully and boldly this experience in our theology, our liturgy, and certainly in our lives as ministers, teachers, pastors, counselors, friends, lovers, not accepting the concept of closed or rigid Christian tradition as viable for open growing people...

...(We are) to seek community with gay men -- to live into our commonness -- but at the same time, to refuse to allow ourselves to be used, again -- and again -- as the scapegoat for their sexuality... We can support our brothers but we cannot ssell them the pearl of great price. Nor will they be able to buy it cheaply.

Insofar as I am open to the possibility of reaching out and touching deeply the life and being of a sister, I am a Lesbian -- and I am good -- and in that one, single affirmation the Christian Church's groan can be heard echoing back 2000 years. And it must be said again, and again, and again, that it is good, and not simply the feelings or the emotions or the caring; but also the activity, the bodies, the love-making that may ensue; the passion -- the whole of who we are -- is good in that yearning for relationship, in which there is no dualism between the body and the soul, the flesh and the spirit, the desire and the activity, the doer and the deed.

In closing, let me say that I have also discovered how much time I need alone -- by myself -- to pray, to walk, to think, to ponder these things in my heart. In continuing to discover the depths of my own yearning for meaningful relationship, I find that I am discovering the depths of my own autonomy. Perhaps the pearl of great price is a paradox: for in discovering my relational possibilities to others, I am discovering myself; and in discovering who I am and have been all along, I am discovering God-with-me, who has been there all along. Going home in the bosom of my God, my friends and lovers, myself, and creation itself, I find I am at home.

MOTHER EAGLE REVIEW

IS A NEWSLETTER OF FEMINIST JOURNALISM. MER attempts to cover women's events in the Northeast district of the Metropolitan Community Church, as well as provide a forum for the feminist / inclusivist religious community.

It is the policy of MER that unsigned editorials represent the consensus view of the editorial board.

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The editorial board reflects geographical distribution and letters of comment and criticism may be addressed to the editor nearest to you. Addresses are provided below.

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from pg 2 Yes, there are women and men who are perfectly happy with the King James English of brotherhood, mankind, and a male Trinity. Yes, "mankind" is supposed to mean everyone, but when it is used so often with so many other male words it becomes difficult to identify with it. Yes, the King James English is traditional; yes, the hymns we sing, the prayers we say are the way they've always been but so was the Judaic practice of not eating

cont'd pg 8

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Christian feminists to explore their beliefs. Because MCC provides this supportive, loving community, it is a good place for feminists to work out their conflicts and questions about Christianity.

MCC enables exploration of feminist theology. Articles have been published in the Gay Christian; Mother Eagle Review has focused on feminist issues, at MCC-DC a course on feminism and Christianity has resulted in a study guide and reader to be shared with all MCC's and available at General Conference.

--Because of gay opperession, MCC is dealing with the nature of sexuality and is working to merge the alienated halves of mind/body created by traditional Christianity. Changing the more superficial aspects of sexism will be meaningless unless we confront the concept of Christ as the male Logos (the traditional spiritual Head of the physical body).

--MCC is also dealing with the sexism of people (through women as ministers, elders, and lay leaders), of language (through inclusive wording for hymns, liturgy, and scripture) and of structure (through congregational form, teams, the enabling concept). MCC is also working actively for social justice at the national and local levels and is a major political leader in the gay community.

There are still some tensions and contradictions -- still a view of sin as pride, still a focus on other-centeredness, still too much worship of Jesus the Man instead of Christ the Redeemer, still too much ignorance of feminist concerns. But this tension is not solely an MCC or even a Christian tension; it is a tension for any feminist alive today in our male-identified world. Because religion is so fundamental in our lives, and also has such a pervasive influence on our basic attitudes and values (both as a source and reinforcement), it is essential that feminists focus on their spiritual needs and that we continue to work through these tensions in our churches. MCC is an especially good place to raise these theological questions because it is already dealing with so many of them.

Jennie Bull - MCC-DC

CONGRATS N.Y.!

on your Fifth Anniversary!! One of our editors got back to us that you had a "tremendous" (and inclusive) service!

Hatchings

We're pleased to introduce a new column to MER by Marge Ragona, co-author of "De-Sexing Your Local Hymnal". Each issue Marge will offer inclusive revisions of a hymn and scripture passage as well as other helpful hints for those pastors and laypeople concerned that we build a new, inclusivist base in MCC. About time, right? Well, here goes — in the name of Truth, Justice and the Inclusive Way — this issue's dose of Marge's home remedy for those nasty sexist habits.

Dear Marge:

I like playing with dolls and dishes and I like being oppressed! Why do I have to change oppressive words and spoil all the fun of being put down and forgotten? It makes me happy to be treated that way.

Maisie

Dear Maisie:

Of course you like to be oppressed, you were taught to like it. It's the way society controls us and gets us to do things their way! It's comfortable and the way you've always done it. But it's not good for you! It makes you less than what you can be, and the church is a place to grow into the best that God has in mind for you. Also, it may help if we show you what we mean by "inclusive" language and changing the hymns to be less male-oriented. Okay. Try it for a while, and see how it makes you feel. It should make you feel stronger, and more able to cope! Write us again. (Tell Sadie to do the dishes tonight and see how that feels!) Here's the hymn-of-the-month -- traditional Irish melody (lovely, lilting) and beautiful words. Nothing lost in translation -- and it's in the Presbyterian Worshipbook, Pilgrim (UCC)Hymnal, and the Methodist Hymnal.

BE THOU MY VISION

Be thou my vision, O lord of my heart
Naught be all else to me, save that thou art
Thou my best thought, by day or by night,
Waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.

Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true word
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord;
Thou my Cre-a-tor, I tru-ly thine
Thou in me dwelling, and thy will be mine.

Riches I heed not, no one's empty praise,
Thou mine inheritance, now and always
Thou and thou only, first in my heart,
God of all people, my treasure thou art.

Great God of heaven, my victory won,
May I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall
Still be my vision, O Ruler of all. Amen.

Tune: Shane
Trans. by Mary Byre, improved by MCC.

If you have found a hymn or a new way of doing a traditional piece of the liturgy -- or a particularly apt piece of scripture. Send it to us -- we'll print it in a forthcoming issue.

* 44 Gartland St. Boston 02130*

certain foods and of ceremonial handwashing.

Paul, in Romans 14, is repeating one of the basic themes of Christ's teachings -- tradition is not to be upheld at all costs! That the spirit of God's commandment is love; the spirit of Jesus' teachings is what is important; that Christianity is a religion of change -- not of status quo. Jesus brought the message of God's love in a different way than it had been presented before, because people had missed the point of the old message. Are we missing the point of the new message?

If Jesus were walking on our earth today what do you think his message would be? Do you think Jesus would say you can only start the Lord's Prayer with "Our Father..." Remember it was Jesus who cast God in the image of a woman, when he told the parable of the woman searching for her lost coin -- as God searches for a lost soul. Do you think Jesus would say, "Sure! "Mankind" means everyone! If those dumb women can't understand that it's their problem!" I doubt it. Jesus died that everyone might have eternal life. Jesus would want to make sure that the message got to everyone. Jesus would be the first to use language to which his audience could relate -- and he did. Jesus is a radical, and this message of change did not end with his death and resurrection, and it doesn't end with the issue of inclusive language. It is the message we must remember whenever we say, "because that's the way I've always done it, that's the way it should be done." It's the message we must remember every time we get comfortable.

Our referring to God in female terms part of the time isn't,however, quite as radical as we think. Jesus was not the only one to cast God in female images. Old Testament writers and prophets were able at times to break away from their male-oriented references. Some examples are Deut. 32:18, "You forgot the God who gave you birth, " and Isaiah 42:14, "Now I (God speaking) will cry out like a woman in childbirth."

Then we have the Hebrew word for God, "Eloi." It is feminine, but in order to make it more holy, the male Bible writers chose to use it in its masculine plural form, "Elohim" which meant gods and came to mean God. It was for Eloi that Christ cried from the cross.

The Hebrew word for Holy Spirit, Ruach is also feminine. It is the same word which is used for Wisdom in the Bible, which is always translated "she", but Holy Spirit is always translated "He." Why? Because for centuries men have written, translated and interpreted the Bible from their male perspective.

We can also ask is the resurrected Christ male? Will we, in the life hereafter be female and male. If we are to believe Paul, the answers to these questions must be "No!" Galatians 3:27-28 reads:

> For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Paul has, in this passage, discounted all physical differences in people once we have "taken on the qualities of Christ," -- they no longer exist. Perhaps this is part of the reason the disciples didn't recognize Jesus after the resurrection. They weren't expecting Jesus -- that's for sure -- but they would have been looking for their traditional concept of Jesus, not for a changed, resurrected Christ.

Our language, in public worship, can include everyone. Our services can be made equally meaningful to all. Many hymns can easily have a word or two changed, a "his" changed to "God's," "men" changed to "folk" "mankind" to"people." The hymn still has the same beautiful music, the same poetic flow, the same basic meaning. "She" can be used as frequently as "he" when referring to an unspecified person. People can be allowed and encouraged to use their own form of address when praying to God.

We must also consider that there are people who can only relate to the traditional language. We have a responsibility to inform these people of what's going on with our language changes and why. We also need to include -- and our message about stumbling blocks holds here, too -- some traditional language, particularly in very familiar prayers or scriptures, so we involve and include everyone.

This brings us to what is probably our biggest challenge to being able to change, to being innovative. Can this person sit through a traditional "Our Father who art in heaven" and desexed hymns this week, and can that person sit through a King James reading of John 3:16 and an "Our Friend who art in heaven..." next week? Can we put forth the energy, love, and patience that is necessary to have a message of love and inclusivity? It is much harder this way. We can't follow the easy path we know so well, but we can grow and become more and more inclusive, more and more Christ-like. We need only to remember the commandment of love and that our primary task is to spread, to all people, the message of salvation through belief in Jesus Christ.

MOTHER EAGLE REVIEW

Volume I Number 9 October 1977

WOMEN'S TASK FORCE ACTIONS IN DENVER

The Women's Task Force meetings at the Eighth General Conference were devoted primarily to exchanging information as to what the various Districts were doing. This developed in part because the Christian Social Action Commission, of which WTF is a part, had decided not to present resolutions but to more actively pursue the task of education and of getting CSAC's going on more District and local church levels. The WTF affirmed this direction.

The WTF report is printed elsewhere in this issue and it should also be read for a more complete report. The delegates elected by the Districts represented a cross section of the women within the Fellowship...feminists, conservatives, and middle-of-the-roaders. There was a good flow of information and ideas and a lot of listening to each other. Several District delegates had sent out questionnaires to determine how people felt on such issues as inclusive language and female images of God. The WTF will be sending out a questionnaire to the various churches via the delegates.

As the Northeast District delegate to this Task Force I offered that Mother Eagle Review could become a communication device for the Task Force. Several women present were regular reader's of MER and they praised it and stated they had learned from it. Some of these same women pointed out, however, that many people will not read it due to the female reference to God in the title. I explained the derivation of the name. It was then proposed that the WTF use MER for their news stories and articles if the name were changed. This was agreed upon by the Task Force.

If this arrangement comes into being it would mean that NorthEast Women would retain publishing and editorial control of the newsletter. We would, however, print Task Force information with a notation that it is from the WTF. This arrangement will only occur if the name is changed. We are under no agreement to change the name if we wish to continue publishing as we have been.

Rev. Claudia Vierra, who was appointed by the Board of Elders as Chairperson of the WTF after Rev. Ann Montague resigned, was elected to a two year term as chairperson. This was changed to a two year term as General Conferences will only be held every two years now. The WTF also recommended to the Districts that they elect their delegates and alternates for two year terms.

The WTF suggested to people that they read and use CHRISTIAN VIEWS OF FEMINISM. This is the study guide compiled by Jennie Bull and financed by the Northeast District. During the discussion of the WTF report on the floor of the Business Meeting Rev. Howard Wells called the study guide brilliant.

by Nancy Avard

MOTHER EAGLE REVIEW

is the newsletter of NEW, NorthEast Women of Metropolitan Community Church. MER provides a forum for the feminist/inclusivist religious community as well as attempting to cover women's events in the Northeast District. MER hopes to be a vehicle of support and encouragement for women who are presently in the minority of their local MCC.

It is the policy of MER that unsigned editorials represent the consensus view of the editorial board. Signed articles and editorials are the view of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the editorial board or of MCC. The appearance of any name in this publication is not an indication of that person's sexual orientation.

The Editorial Board reflects geographical distribution, and letters of comment and criticism may be addressed to the editor nearest to you.

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NorthEast Women News

Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson attended the Northeast District Conference in New York and gave a workshop.

Rev. Marge Ragona, Rev. Karen Zeigler and Rev. Shelley Hamilton from the Northeast District were licensed as UFMCC ministers at the General Conference in Denver.

Rev. Shelley Hamilton, assistant district coordinator, was recently elected assistant pastor of MCC-Brooklyn, NY.

Rev. Marge Ragona was recently elected pastor of MCC-Providence, RI.

Deacon Esther Smith and Darlene Hines, chairperson of the Stewardship Team, were two of the many MCC-DC members who joined other Northeast District MCCers for a chartered bus trip to General Conference. Darlene was one of MCC-DC's delegates to general conference.

NEW from the publishers of The Woman's Bible
THE WORD FOR US
Gospels of John and Mark, Epistle to Romans and Galatians, Restated in Inclusive Language
by Joann Haugerud $5.45 ppd.

The Women's Bible, Commentary by Elizabeth Cady Stanton $7.45 ppd.
Study Guide to the Woman's Bible by Coalition members $3.75 ppd.
bulk discount on all books
COALITION ON WOMEN AND RELIGION, 4759 15th Ave. NE, Seattle WA 98105

Elders Speak on Troy Perry's Fast

"For if you keep silence at such a time as this, relief and deliverance will rise... from another quarter, but you and your house will perish. And who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?...Then I will go to the king though it is against the law: and if I perish, I perish." (Esther 4:14-16)

A prophet is not one who is infallible, but one who wrestles with fallible human will and seeks to surrender it to God. A prophet is not one who always speaks for God, but rather one through whom God, at times, speaks--one who shares the prophetic revelation of God's message to humankind....

We call upon each individual and each church group in the UFMCC to follow the leading of God's Spirit through the visionary and prophetic voice of our founder. We believe that we are called in this way to return to the enthusiasm of preaching God's inclusive love for all people, so that the Christian Church might be led back to the Gospel principles on which it was founded by Christ himself."

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The question of changing the name of Mother Eagle Review is one on which there are varying opinions. An inclusive publication cannot, by its nature, assume that there is only one view that can be correct. Therefore, the differing viewpoints presented here are an attempt to educate our readers on different aspects of the question. At its October meeting at the Northeast District Conference in New York City, the Northeast Women will discuss as a group whether or not the name of the newsletter should be changed, and an attempt will be made to reach a decision.

WHY WE SHOULD CHANGE THE NAME

Mother Eagle Review is a newsletter with the goals of providing support for women within MCC and educating people, to raise their consciousness on feminist and inclusivist issues. Although the name, Mother referring to God, reflects the feminist aspect it does not reflect the inclusive aspect of these goals.

By use of this name we state we are a feminist newsletter promoting the use of female images of God to replace the male images so long used. Is that our intent or are we promoting the use of inclusive language?

In the resolution the Northeast presented to the Women's Task Force at the '76 General Conference we said "inclusive language." That resolution went on to receive unanimous approval of the '76 General Conference. Should we not then also be the ones to set the example for inclusive language useage?

We have said and still say change the language in scripture, hymns, and liturgy so turned off women will come to MCC and be able to hear our message of God's love. We have only been requested to do the same thing...change the language of the name (not the content) of our newsletter so turned off people will read it. So they will hear the message of God's love and inclusivity.

A newsletter, like a newspaper, is a first line means of communication and education. It is read by people who read on a lot of varied topics and by people who only occasionally read books. It is, therefore, a channel that reaches or can reach an audience for whom this is their first or prime means of consciousnes raising.

Some of these people are not being reached because they are turned away by the Mother reference to God. That is the reason they do not read it despite the high praises it receives from their friends. Do we want it to reach as many people as possible in order to raise their conscious or do we want to project a radical feminist image?

The name, Mother Eagle Review is not descriptive of what this newsletter is nor is it representative of the philosophy that MER has been trying to present in its last two issues. If we chose to be a feminist newsletter with a feminist name we should then stop saying we are inclusive because we have excluded people by our exclusive name.

Aside from the feminine image of God what about the image of God projected by the word eagle or the picture of an eagle with arrows in its claws. Do you know that a mother eagle will viciously attack anything or anyone threatening her young? She will peck out eyes and claw until the attacker flees or is dead. Do we want to project an image of God being vicious and war like or do we want to present an image of a loving, forgiving God who finds more peaceful ways to protect those of us who are children of God?

The goals and ideas for this newsletter have changed since its inception. It seems only appropriate to reflect that change in the name as well as in the editorial policy statement.

Among our readers and staff a name could be found that would be more descriptive of this newsletter, of God or of us. One suggestion already made also borrows from "Our God Is Like An Eagle." It is, I Who Am, a paraphrase of Exodus 3:14. Another idea presented is a take off from that, We Who Are.

Writer's note:
The comments made about the eagle image of God are not equally applicable to the hymn as Larry Bernier has in that hymn described in what ways God is like an eagle.

by Nancy Avard

Mother Eagle Images

"As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: So the Lord alone did lead him and there was no strange god with him."
(Deuteronomy 32: 11-12)

It is these verses in Deuteronomy, from the Song of Moses, which praises God's deliverance of Israel from bondage, that arecentral to the meaning of "Mother Eagle" for me. And that meaning is best reflected in Rev. Larry Bernier's hymn, "Our God Is Like An Eagle." Both the hymn and the Biblical passage speak of a liberating and protecting God, a God who "helps us learn to fly." God is symbolized by a mighty bird--a bird of great swiftness (as in Isaiah 40:31, "they shall mount up with wings as eagles"), and great height and great wingspan. And this eagle is seen not only as almighty and powerful, but also as nourishing and teaching and protective. Those wings not only offer protection, they also teach us. Literally, the mother eagle supports the young eagles when they are learning to fly by carrying them on her wings. And the mother eagle nourishes. This concept, perhaps the most female aspect of the mother eagle image, refers to God as nurturing and is similar to "el shaddai," the almighty one, the great breast that nourishes us as a mother nourishes her children. Mother eagle is thus a personal image, not one of a strange god.

These are the images that Mother Eagle brings to my mind--of God who is both all-powerful and all-nourishing. As human beings of two sexes, we have often assigned male and female values to various qualities (and often quite arbitrarily). Power is seen as a male image and nurture as a female image. The power of the Mother Eagle image for me is that, by focusing on the eagle it takes us past the human to focus on those powerful and nurturing qualities of God.

As a feminist, one of my main concerns is that we all explore fully the meaning of the line in the hymn, "God is both and neither, Our God is I WHO AM." It is simply too easy to say that God is neither male nor female; God is also "both." And in approaching our images of God from an inclusive perspective, one of our challenges as Christians is to learn to love and know many images of God, to know that the female, nurturing eagle image is as true a Biblical expression as is the all-powerful, soaring eagle--and that they are one and the same! (continued on next page)

OUR GOD IS LIKE AN EAGLE

When Israel camped in Sinai, Then Moses heard the Lord,
This message tell the people, and give them this my word,
From Egypt I was with you, and carried on my wing,
The whole of your great nation, from slav'ry I did bring.

Just as a mother eagle, who helps her young to fly,
I am a Mother to you, your needs I will supply,
And you are as my Children, my own who hear my voice,
I am a Mother to you, the people of my choice.

If God is like an Eagle, who helps her young to fly,
And God is also Father, then what of You and I?
We have no fear of labels, we have no fear of roles,
If God's own being blends them, we seek the self-same goal.

Our God is not a woman, our God is not a man,
Our God is both and neither, our God is I Who Am,
From all the roles that bind us, our God has set us free,
What freedom does God give us? The freedom just to be.

words by Rev. Larry Bernier
tune, "Stand Up, Stand Up to Jesus"

Mother Eagle Images (continued)

Because one of the goals of a feminist-inclusivist view is to encourage openness to all images of God, the name Mother Eagle serves to remind our readers not only of the power of a female image, but much more importantly, of the power of an image that includes many attributes through which we know God's presence in our lives, those typified as both male and female.

Fear of the Other

Besides the symbol itself, there are other issues involved: Another question that should be asked is, What are the objections of those who find Mother Eagle Review difficult to relate to as a name? One of our responsibilities as Christians is not to put stumbling blocks in the way of others, so only in understanding and responding to these objections can we hope to educate and learn ourselves. A primary objection is that the symbol is primarily a female one and thus exclusive, which feeds the fear of some that feminists are trying to replace a male God with a female God. Whether or not Mother Eagle Review remains the name of this newsletter, the editors of MER are committed to an inclusive image of God, containing BOTH male and female images.

This fear of female images has many roots. For some it is simply a love of the traditional and resistance to changing deeply held traditional images. The inclusive goal is to add to our images of God, not to subtract those we already hold. For others the fear is related to a fear of dominance by women, a loss of power. This fear is kin to the "castrating bitch"stereotype, or the "blacks are taking over the neighborhood" stereotype or the "gays will corrupt our children" stereotype. All of these fears occur when a "different" minority, the "other," is believed to be increasing in numbers or strength. These stereotypes are based on fearing the unknown and on seeing any increase from a narrowly defined place or traditional role as a threat to take over completely. For some there is an element of guilt in this fear, that says "I am guilty of oppressing, so their only response can be competition, hatred and takeover." Also, when something is unfamiliar, even the smallest amount seems much larger than it actually is. As with all fears based on stereotypes, they are false; instead we must relate to each other one-to-one, as children equally capable of giving and receiving God's love. "From all the roles that bind us, our God has set us free, What freedom does God give us? The freedom just to be."

Jennie B. Bull

Bryant a Bitch?

(Reprinted from Off Our Backs, a feminist news journal, September 1977. By CAD.)

The gay media is full of cartoons caricaturing Anita Bryant as a mean mother, an axe-toting Carrie Nation in a gay bar, or some sort of monster (which may show what they think of mothers, Carrie Nation, etc.) No doubt Bryant is an obnoxious, dangerous, reactionary, but some of the attacks on her seem woman-hating. Numerous throw-the-dart-at-Anita games are advertised in the gay press. One particularly obnoxious ad shows her clad only in oranges, with balloon words saying, "I need a ----" coming from her mouth. The ad says, "Pin an orange on Anita's ---." This is carrying things a little far. It is Bryant or woman in general that is being attacked? It is also less than thrilling to see posters of male demonstrators carrying posters of Bryand and Adolf Hitler, although that is more understandable than the dart game level of attack. Of course, we don't love Bryant, but when she attacks gay men and all women by implying that sexuality must be tied to reproduction she is tightening her own chains as well as ours.

Support from Europe

European lesbians, feminists, gay men and other supporters demonstrated against the anti-homosexual crusade in the United States. Groups of 1,000 in London, 2,000 in Amsterdam and 4,000 in Barcelona marched in our support. In Paris, several hundred people from groups like "Lesbiennes et feministes," the Homosexual Liberation group and others marched to defend gay people. Several women carried a banner saying, "We are all American lesbians," an adaptation of the 1968 slogan "We are all German Jews." (Seeing the picture of those women so far away supporting us is incredibly moving.)

WHAT'S IN A NAME--ANOTHER VIEW

Let's start with a simple fact:

We are not promoting a name for God in our masthead. We are promoting a name for our newsletter in our masthead. Period.

Certainly, as a Christian feminist publication, MER has encouraged the use of female as well as male qualities for God because this makes our idea of the Creator whole and dimensional and real. But -- let's not confuse the issue debated here; let's not argue whether we believe "Mother Eagle" is a good or bad reference to God, but whether it is a good name as itself for a Christian feminist publication. I believe it is. And, after a good deal of thought, I don't believe there are compelling enough grounds for changing it.

The Task Force on Women needs to make their material available to women by whatever means possible. They may decide to use MER in that effort (we have been and always will be open to them) or they may not. But they may not tell us the price of running an occasional article is the elimination of our name. The brush that wipes out the name of a publication wipes out its identity for its readers, its past, all the things that have made it what it is. It is more than a superficial change.

For a small, young, struggling, fault-ridden newsletter, MER has printed some wonderful work. It has contained great ideas--even brilliance--useful information, good news, and "helpful hints" to congregations struggling for nonsexist worship. It is a newsletter that not only tries to inform as to inclusivity, but ease the awkwardness of change. And this is the crux of the matter: Can we have done this and continue to do it under the emblem of a mother eagle, an image that some say is "scaring" some, driving them away--not by our content, mind you, but merely by our mascot?

We are proud of what we have done. And we are not ashamed of having chosen for ourselves the image of a strong, parental, female eagle.

It is a name that calls to the strength in women. It is a name that equally evokes the possibility of tenderness in images conventionally thought of as masculine and warlike. It is a name that synthesizes.

I believe the Task Force on Women would be better served by beginning their own newsletter--Calling it by whatever they wish, they can then carve out their own identity without co-opting ours.

Let's continue our work and recognize that part of that work is to teach people that they need not be ashamed or afraid of female images that are strong or of male images that are nurturing, that this is part of synthesizing, coming together, and that although it is often frightening it is always good.

If we change our very name because others are afraid, we don't understand the responsibility we have to ease fears by refusing to be timid ourselves, the task we have to serve as an EXAMPLE of synthesis without co-optation or fear.

Because if we don't teach as an example, we don't teach at all.

The Task Force on Women will continue to be welcome on the pages of the Mother Eagle Review.

by Jean Gralley

RESOURCES

(from The New Woman's Survival Sourcebook by Susan Rennie and Kirsten Grimstad. New York: Alfred Knopf, 1975, page 189.)

RELIGIOUS STUDIES NEWSLETTER

From:
Office of Women's Affairs
Graduate Theological Union
2465 LeConte Avenue
Berkeley, California 94709

$2.50/four issues

DAUGHTERS OF SARAH

5104 North Christiana
Chicago, Illinois 60625

$2.00/six issues

A bi-monthly newsletter published by women for whom "Christianity and feminism are inseparable."

The following newsletters are available with membership in the sponsoring group:

THE COMMON LOT
United Church of Christ Task Force on Women in Church and Society

297 Park Avenue South
New York, New York 10010

THE YELLOW RIBBON
National United Methodist Women's Caucus

1819 Oakton
Evanston, Illinois 60202

RUACH: Newsletter of the Episcopal Women's Caucus

c/o Frances Trott
20 Geneva Court
Wayne, New Jersey 07470

THE SISTERHOOD . . . For Personhood

From:
Joyce Slayton Mitchell
Wolcott, Vermont 05680

A quarterly newsletter of the N.O.W. Task Force on Women and Religion.

THE WOMAN'S PULPIT
Official Journal of the International Association of Women Ministers
edited by LaVonne Althouse

2809 Queen Lane
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19129

CONSCIENCE
Catholics for a Free Choice

515 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10022

A FACT from the Sept. '77 issue of MS: "90 percent of all sexually abused children are girls abused by heterosexual men."

REPORT FROM THE TASK FORCE ON WOMEN

(at the Eighth General Conference of UFMCC Denver, Colorado, 1977)

Although there was not a great amount of information coming out of the Task Force on Women this year, I feel that some significant steps have been made. Let me share with you some of the discoveries and directions that are coming from the Task Force. It seems that in the past (as well as in the present) the Task Force on Women has had a "bad" reputation. Often when the Task Force's name is mentioned people have run for cover expecting something horrible to happen. And I will be the first to admit sometimes they had justifiable reason. However, I feel that the time has come for us to take down our barriers and begin to seriously communicate with each other. The members of the Task Force are in agreement that now is a time when healing is needed, a time to lovingly share with each other. We have come to realize that not only are all the Task Force members in different places, but also so are all of our church groups. It is time to stop expecting people to all be of the same mind about issues regarding Human Awareness. We are not saying that the issues are of any less importance nor are we saying that we have adequately dealt with them. We are saying that it is time to evaluate and slowly move toward our goals.

The Task Force has pledged itself to the following items for the coming years:

1. To build a workable communication system between Task Force members, commission members, and our church groups.
2. To begin a study (via questionnaires, raps, etc.) of just how UFMCC members think and feel about Human Awareness issues.
3. To foster communication throughout UFMCC via the Northeast District's women's publication.

We are hoping that our work the next two years will give us the information that will allow us to create and gather educational materials that will be of benefit for specific church groups, geared to their needs. We ask that all of you work with us to accomplish this. You can begin by electing a Representative from your local congregations that will give input to your elected District Representative, who will in turn give input to me; who will in turn give input to the overall commission; who will give input back to the local church groups.

The following is the list of the Task Force members:

Chairperson: Rev. Claudia Vierra (Berkeley)
Northwest Dist: Rev. Sherrie James (SaltLake)
Northeast Dist: Jennie Bull (Washington,DC)
Southwest Dist: Bessie Manly (San Diego)
Southeast Dist: Jean Bush (Tampa)
Mid-Central Dist: Rev. Rhea Miller (Denver)
South Central Dist: Rev. Candace Naisbitt (Houston)
South Atlantic Dist: Barbara Weaver (Atlanta)
Great Lakes Dist:
Canada Dist:

We ask that you work with them when they come to you needing information.

We are also suggesting to you the book, Feminist Views of Christianity, by Jennie Bull, as a resource for your church group.

The Task Force is looking forward to two years of work, healing and loving communication with you.

Rev. Claudia L. Vierra
Chairperson, Task Force on Women

WOMEN UFMCC MINISTERS LICENSED IN DENVER

Of the 35 ministers licensed, 15 are women, almost 50 percent!

Rev. Arlene Ackerman
Rev. Lucia Chappelle
Rev. Judy Davenport
Rev. Shelley Hamilton
Rev. Jacquelyn Harris
Rev. Renie Hein
Rev. Janet Howard
Rev. Susan Kliebenstein
Rev. Sherry James
Rev. Sandra McMillan
Rev. Marjorie Ragona
Rev. Charlene Taylor
Rev. Angeline Umbertino
Rev. Karen Wheeler
Rev. Karen Ziegler

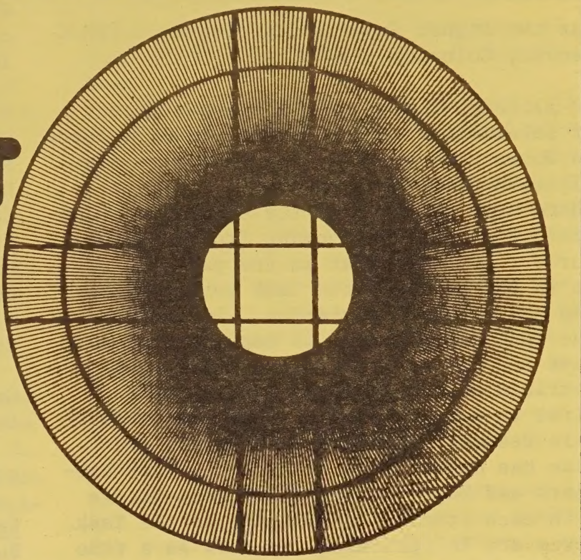
Of the 9 ministers ordained, 2 are women:

Rev. Elder Carol S. Cureton
Rev. Jeri Ann Harvey

OUR CONGRATULATIONS AND LOVE TO ALL NEW MINISTERS IN OUR FELLOWSHIP--WE THANK GOD FOR THEIR SERVICE AND LEADERSHIP IN HELPING US BUILD OUR CHURCH AND DO GOD'S WILL.

NEW FROM MOTHER EAGLE PRESS, NORTHEAST DISTRICT, METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH

FEMINIST VIEWS OF CHRISTIANITY



A STUDY GUIDE AND READER

Compiled, with notes, by Jennie B. Bull
"Women and the Bible" by Rev. Marge Ragona
Illustrations by Jean Gralley

A valuable resource for education programs, discussion groups or individual reading. Includes discussion notes and questions for six sessions. Recommended by UFMCC Task Force on Women at 1977 General Conference. 120 pages. Illustrated. Paper. $3.50 Mother Eagle Press, 1977.

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Englewood, N.J. 07631

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III. FEMINIST THEOLOGY
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Studies of the role of women in early Christianity generally conclude that women were marginal figures in the early Christian movement. Our sources scarcely mention women and refer to them only in passing. They do no more than transmit the names of some early Christian women; providing very little information about them. If we assume that these sources are objective reports of the crucial events and leading persons in early Christianity, we would have to conclude that this scanty information reflects the actual role women held in the early Christian church.

Academic and popular discussions of discipleship, church order, worship or mission have generally taken for granted that the early Christian communities had an all-male leadership. Scholars have believed that the structures of the early Christian communities reflected the structures and values of contemporary patriarchal Jewish or Greco-Roman society. Thus, by definition, women would have been relegated to marginal roles in early Christianity. This reconstruction of early church history from the point of view of male dominance functions today as a social and theological mythology that determines our self-understanding and justifies the present ecclesial structures of male power.[1] New analyses of the social world of early Christianity which show it, not as a culturally well-adapted, monolithic group, but as an egalitarian, countercultural, multifaceted movement suggest an alternative view.[2] This view becomes clear when all the early sources, apocryphal and heterodox as well as canonical and orthodox, are examined. Membership in this egalitarian, pluriform movement was not defined by gender roles, but by faith commitment to the Christian community. Women, in this egalitarian movement, were not marginal figures but exercised responsible leadership.

During the early missionary period, leadership roles were diversified and based on actual function and service. Gradually these became institutionalized, and a patriarchalization of the Christian community, offices and theology took place, as the early Christians adopted the institutional forms of the surrounding patriarchal culture. Charismatic leadership rooted in the experience of and in the obedience to the Spirit was gradually replaced by patriarchal office[3] and cultic ministry.[4] This development was not the same in all places, but followed different patterns in various Christian groups. The patriarchal line of early Christian development played down women's role or made it marginal. But the earlier countercultural and later extraecclesial groups accepted women as equal members with equal responsibility and leadership.[5]

The earliest Christians understood themselves as freed by the Spirit to a new life of egalitarian discipleship. This theological understanding is expressed in the pre-Pauline baptismal formula (Galatians 3:27ff.).[6] Newly baptized Christians affirmed that in this new community there was no longer any distinction between Jew and Gentile, free and slave, male and female, but that all were united in Christ Jesus. It was a commonplace among Jews as well as Greeks to be thankful that they were humans and not beasts, Greeks and not barbarians, Jews and not Gentiles, free-born and not slaves, men and not women. The Christian egalitarian creed was formulated over and against this commonly accepted ratification of social discrimination in Judaism and Hellenism.

This confrontation of the Christian affirmation with those of the surrounding cultures shows that the new vision of community was not just a heavenly ideal, but was accepted as a historical reality. Over against the patriarchal pattern of the "world," Christians understood themselves as a new community, in which all members shared equally in the freedom of the children of God[7] and in which privileged religious, class and gender roles were abolished. The patriarchal cultural paradigm was replaced by the vision of a community where people lived together in love and service.[8] Not only Gentiles and slaves but also women could be full and equal members of this community.

*Women as Founders and Leaders of Congregations**

Historians of early Christianity generally fail to notice the important role women played in founding and promoting house churches. Since the house church was a decisive factor in early Christian development,[9] it provided the leadership and determined the form of church life. In the house church the early Christians celebrated the Eucharist (Acts 2:46; 20:7) and preached the Gospel (Acts 5:42). The assembly was called the "house of God," the new "temple," because the Spirit dwelt in it.[10]

Wealthy women converts (cf. Acts 17:4,12) exercised decisive influence on these gatherings. Acts 12:12 refers to a specific prayer meeting in the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark. Paul greets Apphia, "our sister," who together with Philemon and Archippus was a leader of a house church in Colossae (Philemon 2). The church in Philippi was founded with the conversion of the businesswoman Lydia from Thyatira (Acts 16:14). The author of Colossians refers to Nympha of Laodicea and the "church in her house" (Co-

* Throughout the chapter, references and spellings, etc., are to and from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

lossians 4:15). Paul twice mentions the missionary couple Prisca (Priscilla) and Aquila and "the church in their house" (1 Corinthians 16:19; Romans 16:3–5). He wrote the first letter to the Corinthians in response to a report made by slaves who belonged to the household of a woman Chloe (1 Corinthians 1:11).[11]

We have no reason to assume that women were excluded from the leadership of the house churches or from presiding at worship. The "household codes"[12] probably are a later patriarchal reaction to this leadership of women within the house churches.[13] This assumption is supported by 1 Timothy 2, where the injunctions that women should be submissive and not teach are given in the context of regulations for worship.

Paul explicitly mentions women as his missionary coworkers. The texts give no indication that these women were dependent on or subordinate to Paul. Only five of Paul's coworkers (Erastus, Mark, Timothy, Titus and Tychicus) "stand in an explicit subordination to Paul, serving him or being subject to his instructions."[14] The most common terms, e.g., "co-worker" (Prisca), "brother/sister" (Apphia), "*diakonos*" (Phoebe), and "apostle" (Junia), are also found in reference to women. The authentic Pauline letters equate co-workers and "those who toil." In 1 Corinthians 16:16ff. Paul admonishes the addressees to be "subject to every coworker and laborer" and to give recognition to such persons. First Thessalonians 5:12 exhorts the Thessalonian Christians "to respect those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you." Paul uses the same Greek verb, "to labor" or "to toil," not only for his own missionary evangelizing and teaching but also for that of women. In Romans 16:6,12 he commends Mary, Tryphena, Tryphosa and Persis: they have "labored" hard in the Lord.

Paul affirms that women have worked with him on an equal basis. Philippians 4:2f. explicitly states that Euodia and Syntyche have "contended" side by side with him. As in an athletic competition, these women have competed with

thians 6:1,4. According to 1 Corinthians 16:15 the co-workers and laborers are those who "have devoted themselves to the *diakonia* of the saints." The *diakonoi* appear to be not only itinerant missionaries but leaders in local congregations.[21] The term is used in the New Testament and also in secular sources to refer to preaching and teaching. Thus, the *diakonoi* served in a recognized official capacity as teachers and preachers in the Christian community.

The second title of Phoebe, *prostatis*, is usually translated as "helper" or "patroness," even though in the literature of the time it has the connotation of leading officer, president, governor or superintendent.[22] In 1 Thessalonians 5:12 the verb characterizes persons with authority in the community, and in 1 Timothy 3:4f. and 5:17 it designates the functions of the bishop, deacon or elder. Phoebe thus had a designated role of leadership and teaching in the community of Cenchreae. She was a person with great authority for many and for Paul himself. Like other missionaries, Phoebe received a letter of recommendation. It is possible that, as the *patrona*[23] of the church at Cenchreae, Phoebe, like other *patroni* of collegia (or clubs), traveled to Rome to defend there the interests of her community.

Paul's letters indicate that women were among the prominent and leading missionaries in the early Christian movement. They were co-workers with Paul but did not depend on him or stand under his authority. They were not excluded from any missionary function. They were preachers, teachers and leaders of the community. If we compare their ministry with those of the later deaconesses we have to stress that their ministry was not limited to the ministry to women nor to specific gender roles and functions. The prominence of women in the early Christian movement is confirmed by examining the list of names in Romans 16. Of the thirty-six persons mentioned, sixteen are women and eighteen men. The Pauline letters thus give us a glimpse of the egalitarian early Christian missionary movement.

The writings of the Pauline school, however, also transmit

the injunctions of a patriarchal reaction which, on theological grounds, decree the subordinate role of women. Whether or not Paul himself initiated this reaction is disputed.[24] Certainly, however, those who produced the justifications for the patriarchalization of Christian leadership were able to claim the authority of Paul without being challenged. Even though 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 concedes to women the gift of prophecy and liturgical functions, the passage nevertheless demands that women adapt to the role definition of their society. This demand is theologically justified by regarding the headship of God over Christ, Christ over man, and man over woman as a revealed hierarchy: God–Christ–man–woman.[25] For the sake of order the church order in 1 Corinthians 14:33b–36 forbids women to speak in the assembly and directs them to their husbands for religious instruction.[26]

The so-called household codes of the Deutero-Pauline literature uphold the patriarchal order of the family. These rules of conduct were universally accepted in Judaism and Hellenism and soon became a part of Christian theology.[27] According to them, women express and practice their Christian faith by observing the social-patriarchal order. In 1 Timothy 2:9–15 women are both commanded to keep silent and behave modestly, and explicitly forbidden to teach or to have any authority over men.[28] This ruling bases itself upon Genesis 2 and 3: Eve is second in the order of creation, and first in the order of sin. The author formulates this patriarchal theology for his community against a rival Christian group which had great success among women (2 Timothy 3:6) and probably accorded women teaching and leadership functions.[29]

The Acts of Paul and Thecla is a second-century writing devoted entirely to the story of a woman missionary.[30] In many regions this book was regarded as canonical in the first three centuries. It mentions a great number of women, besides the apostle Thecla. Thecla is converted by Paul. She takes a vow of continence and is persecuted for this by her

fiancé and her family. Condemned to death, she is saved by a miracle and goes with Paul to Antioch. A Syrian falls in love with Thecla, is rejected and takes revenge. When Thecla is condemned to fight with wild beasts, she baptizes herself in a pit full of water, whereupon, since the beasts do not harm her, she is set free. Her protectress, Tryphena, together with a part of her household, is converted to Christianity. Thecla proclaims the Word of God in the house of Tryphena, then follows Paul to Myra. After only a short while with him, she receives the commission "to teach the word of God" and goes to Iconium and from there to Seleucia, where she enlightens many with the Gospel.

Since Paul does not stand in the foreground of the narrative, the author of *The Acts of Paul and Thecla* appears to have incorporated independent traditions about Thecla. The image of the woman missionary depicted here is striking.[31] Thecla is commissioned by Paul to "go and teach the word of God." Women in Carthage at the beginning of the third century still could appeal to the apostle Thecla for women's authority to teach and to baptize.[32]

In other ways the picture of Thecla reflects typical feminine stereotypes. She falls in love with Paul, follows him and is dependent on him. On the other hand, her rejection of marriage brings her into conflict with the patriarchal values of her society. Motifs of the Hellenistic novel or romance are here taken over for missionary purposes.[33] We find the motif of "love at first sight," the separation motif, the theme of the "devoted couple," and faithfulness despite great pressures. Of course, in the Christian work the apostle and the woman are not sexual lovers but live in absolute continence.[34] Obviously these legends and stories could imagine women as preachers and missionaries only in romantic terms. Women renounce the old family and kinship ties, not for independent values of the faith but for a spiritual love relationship to the apostle. In the genre of romantic love, the woman is infatuated, follows the apostle, and remains faithful to him under the greatest pressures. Nevertheless,

the picture of Thecla retains elements of the authority of early Christian women missionaries.

Women Prophets in Early Christianity

Prophets played an eminent role within the early Christian community. From the very beginning they functioned as inspired oracles of the resurrected Lord, their authority based on divine revelation communicated by the Spirit. Paul regards prophets as second only to apostles in the leadership of the church, and they were still regarded as the normative church leaders in some Christian communities in the mid-second century.[35] Paul takes for granted that women also act as prophets in the Christian assembly. He insists, however, that they do it in a proper way and do not overstep the gender differences between women and men (1 Corinthians 12:2–16).

In Luke it is declared that the Spirit is given to all Christians, to women as well as men (Acts 2:17f.).[36] In the infancy narrative Anna and Mary function as prophets.[37] He also refers to the four prophetess daughters of Philip (Acts 21:9). Eusebius tells us their fame was so great in the early church that the provinces of Asia argue for their apostolic origin by referring to the burial place of one of them in Asia Minor.[38] Papias of Hierapolis claims to have known them personally.[39]

In the second century the Montanists attempted to legitimate their prophecy by establishing a prophetic line of succession. They referred to an Asiatic prophet called Amnia, whose name was still highly respected at the end of the second century.[40] The anti-Montanist writer does not deny her prophetic ministry but claims her for the Catholics. He lists in his succession of recognized prophets Agabus, Judas, Silas, the daughters of Philip, Amnia in Philadelphia, Quadratus and some others.[41] At the beginning of the second century Justin affirms that Christian men and women

have charisms from the Spirit of God.[42] Irenaeus argued against the Alogoi, who denied the validity of prophecy, that Paul acknowledged prophetic women and men in the community.[43]

The Acts of Paul and Thecla mentions women prophets, like Theonoe, Stratonike, Eubulla, Phila, Artemilla and Numpha. At Corinth a prophet Myrta encouraged Paul and the community not to lose heart because Paul has to go to Rome. "The Spirit came upon Myrta, so that she said: . . . Paul the servant of the Lord will save many in Rome and will nourish many with the word . . . so that there will be great grace in Rome."[44] The references to the worship service show that she spoke in the Eucharistic assembly. Early Christian prophecy was liturgical prophecy. Paul's remarks in 1 Corinthians also suggest this. In the *Didache* the prophets are likened to the high priests and have the right to say the Eucharistic prayer. They are, as Spirit-filled persons, not bound to a liturgical formula, but can give thanksgiving freely as much as they want. Only if no prophets and apostles were present were the local ministers, bishops, presbyters and deacons entitled to take their place.[45] The author of the Apocalypse likewise understands himself as a prophet and insists that his "words of prophecy" be read aloud in the liturgical assembly.[46]

The author of the Apocalypse directs his criticism against a rival group of prophets (22:16). The opponents of the author seem also to have been organized in a school.[47] At the end of the first century a prophet-teacher whom the author calls "Jezebel" was the head of such a school in Thyatira. Her followers are characterized as disciples with the technical term "her children."[48] The same expression is used in 2 John 1, 4 and 13 to characterize the followers of the "elect lady" to whom the elder writes.[49] The Apocalypse characterizes "Jezebel" and her activity in language taken from the Old Testament prophets, which called the lapses of Israel into idolatry "adultery and whoredom."[50] In labeling the teacher-prophet "Jezebel" he insinuates that, like the Old

Testament queen, the prophet promoted idolatry and achieved her goals through seductive power and malevolent scheming.

The authority of this prophet and her "school," however, must have been well established in the community in which the author of the Apocalypse also had some followers (2:24). Despite the earlier warnings of John, the "school" of "Jezebel" continued to be a part of the community at Thyatira, and we can therefore assume that the school of this woman prophet was able to withstand the influence of John. Despite this attack on a particular school headed by a woman prophet, John did not discredit female prophecy as such. Asia Minor continued to recognize women as prophets even in the second and third centuries. The impact of the prophet-teacher "Jezebel" may be reflected in the fact that Thyatira later became a center of the Montanist movement, in which women prophets were prominent.[51]

Together with Montanus, Maximilla and Priscilla (or Prisca) were the leading prophets in Montanism.[52] They were not just his companions and followers, but enjoyed equal spiritual gifts and leadership in the Montanist movement. Like Montanus, the women prophets claimed that the Paraclete, or Holy Spirit, spoke directly to them, basing this claim on faith in revelations by the Holy Spirit given to women and men in prophetic ecstasy. The Montanists expected a speedy coming of the Lord and showed a passionate contempt for this world by advocating sexual asceticism, fasting, and martyrdom. The pronouncements of the first three prophets, Priscilla, Maximilla and Montanus, were written down and gathered as sacred documents similar to the words of the Old Testament prophets, the sayings of Jesus and the letters of the apostles.

The two best-known oracles of Priscilla and Maximilla are significant. When Prisca was asleep, Christ, in the form of a *female figure*, appeared to her saying that this was a holy place and here would Jerusalem descend out of heaven.[53] After the death of Montanus, Maximilla became the leader

of the movement. She was persecuted, and commissions were sent out in order to expose her as a fraud.[54] Her opponents attempted to raise doubts about the genuineness of the movement by testing her spirits. Maximilla complained bitterly: "I am pursued like a wolf out of the sheep fold; I am no wolf: I am word and spirit and power." Since the Montanist opponents could not refute the movement on doctrinal grounds, they attacked it by slandering its leading prophets. Charges of immorality and the abandonment of their husbands were brought against the women. It was claimed that Montanist leaders committed suicide and that in their mysteries they slaughtered children, whose blood was mingled in their sacrifices, a charge originally made by the pagans against all Christians.[55] Thus, despite their basic doctrinal orthodoxy, the Montanists were reviled and finally driven out of the mainstream church.[56]

The considerable literature against the Montanists focused its attack especially on the leadership of women. Since Maximilla and Priscilla were proof that the Holy Spirit spoke through the female sex, the Montanists admitted women to church "offices." Didymus maintains that the women prophets in Montanism taught and prophesied in the assembly of the community.[57] Firmilian knows of a Montanist prophetess in Asia Minor who, in A.D. 235, converted many lay people and clerics, and who also baptized and celebrated the Eucharist.[58] Montanists appealed to Galatians 3:28[59] and to the women prophets in Scripture to justify these practices. According to Origen, "those disciples of women, who chose as their master Priscilla and Maximilla, not Christ, the spouse of the Bride, appeal to the following women prophets: the daughters of Philip, Deborah, Mary the sister of Aaron, Hulda, and Anna the daughter of Panuel."[60] Origen refutes this tradition by arguing that these women prophets did not speak in public or in the assemblies.

Scriptural texts cited against the leadership of women by Church Fathers are especially 1 Corinthians 14:34f., 1 Timothy 2:12ff. and 1 Corinthians 11:3,5. The argument against

the prophetic leadership of women is summarized in the comments of Didymus the Blind on 1 Timothy 2:14:

> Scripture recognizes as prophetesses the four daughters of Philip, Deborah, Mary, the sister of Aaron, and Mary, the mother of God, who said as recorded in the Gospel: "Henceforth all *women* [emphasis mine] and all generations shall call me blessed." But in Scripture there are no books written in their name. On the contrary, the Apostle says in First Timothy: "I do not permit women to teach," and again in First Corinthians: "Every woman who prays or prophesies with uncovered head dishonors her head." He means that he does not permit a woman to write books impudently on her own authority, nor to teach in the assemblies, because by doing so, she offends her head man; for "the head of woman is man and the head of man is Christ." The reason for this silence imposed on women is obvious: woman's teaching in the beginning caused considerable havoc to the human race; for the Apostle writes: "It is not the man who deceived, but the woman."[61]

Yet the mainstream church also appealed to the women prophets of Scripture to justify the minor role which they accorded women. The *Apostolic Constitutions* of the fourth century categorically declared: "We do not permit our women to teach in the Church, but only to pray and hear those that teach," and they limit the liturgical ministry of the deaconess to the functions of keeping the doors and assisting the "presbyters in the baptism of women for reasons of decency."[62] The prayer of ordination of women to these minor roles reads:

> O Eternal God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Creator of man and woman, who replenished with the Spirit Miriam and Deborah and Anna, and Hulda; who did not disdain that Thy only begotten Son should be born of a woman; who also in the tabernacle of the testimony and in the temple, did ordain women to be keepers of Thy holy gates . . .[63]

This church order thus accepts the Montanist appeal to the women prophets of Scripture, but uses their argument to justify a secondary role for women in the church.[64]

Women and the Divine Female Principle in Gnostic Communities[65]

Despite the standard complaint of the Church Fathers that women were prominent in Gnostic groups, we have very little information about the actual status and role of women in such communities.[66] We can attempt here only a sketch of the images of male and female in Gnosticism and the roles accorded women in these groups.

Whether or not Marcion[67] be called a Gnostic is disputed. He distinguished the alien God of Goodness, the Father of Jesus Christ, from the World God of Justice, who is the antithesis of the Good God. The Demiurge, or World God, created the cosmos and humankind, but the Good God is absolutely alien to all created things. Human creatures belong bodily and psychically to the World God. Christ came to save them from the World God and to make them children of the alien Good God. Since the Marcionites rejected the created world, they were devoted to rigorous asceticism, and by protesting against flesh and matter they demonstrated that they did not owe allegiance to the World God. Because procreation strengthens the sphere of the Demiurge, they did not marry and have children.

Severus, an associate of Marcion, taught "that woman is the work of Satan. . . . Hence those who consort in marriage fulfill the work of Satan."[68] Marcionism belongs to the type of Gnosticism that starts from a dualism of two opposed principles.[69] In this system femaleness belongs to the sphere of creation, whereas maleness stands for heavenly transcendent realities. In *The Gospel of the Egyptians* a saying of the Savior is quoted: "I am come to destroy the works of the female, by the 'female' meaning lust, and by the 'works' birth and decay."[70]

The classic expression of this dualism of two opposed principles or pairs of opposites is found in terms of male and female in the Pseudo-Clementines: "The present world is female, as the mother bringing forth the souls of the children, but the world to come is male, as a father receiving his children."[71] Therefore, of the two types of prophets in the world, one type is the female, whose words accord entirely with the created world, and the other type is the male prophet who speaks for the coming, higher world.[72] In the encratite *Acts of Thomas* the "communion of the male" is a parallel expression to the "highest gift of grace," "Holy Spirit" or "the power of the Most High."[73] The categories "female and male," therefore, do not so much characterize actual women or men as denote opposite types of dualistic principles.

The Marcionites were well organized, with a hierarchy of bishops and priests. We do not know much about the actual role of women in Marcion's church, but he is said to have appointed women to all church offices on an equal basis with men.[74] A saying of *The Gospel of Thomas* about Mary Magdalene could be applied to these women. In *The Gospel of Thomas* Simon Peter demands that Mary Magdalene leave the circle of disciples, "because women are not worthy of life." Jesus responds, "See, I shall lead her, so that I make her a man. That she too may become a living spirit, who is like you men. For every woman who makes herself a man shall enter the kingdom of heaven."[75]

Apelles, another member of the school of Marcion, revised his teacher's radical dualism. He was influenced by Philumene, an ascetic virgin and prophet at Rome, who supposedly encouraged Apelles to found a new sect.[76] Tertullian therefore calls her not only prophet but also the "*praeceptrix* and *magistra*" of Apelles.[77] Philumene taught and also accompanied Apelles on his various trips, and in the commu-

nities of Apelles her writings were acknowledged as "Holy Scripture."[78]

Like the Marcionites, the Carpocratians distinguish between the unbegotten Father and the God who gave the Law.[79] Since they believe in the migration of the soul, they hold that they can be liberated from the body and from reincarnation not through asceticism but through libertinism. All things are indifferent, and nothing in the world is by nature evil. Not through obedience to laws, however, but only through faith and love are persons saved.[80] The Carpocratians appeal to Salome, Mary Magdalene and Martha as the source and guarantors of their traditions. One of their teachers, Marcellina, represented their teaching in Rome in the middle of the second century and acquired many followers there.

The son of Carpocrates, Epiphanes, taught that the "righteousness of God is communion with equality."[81] Since God provided for all beings equally, no distinction should be made between "rich and poor, people and ruler, foolish and wise, female and male, free and slave."[82] Epiphanes thus espouses the same ideal as Paul (Galatians 3:27f.), but argues the fundamental equality of all, not on the basis of baptism, but on the basis of creation. Therefore his "fellowship with equality" extends not only to gender roles in the Christian community but also to sexuality and marriage. "In that God made all things in common for man and brought together the female with the male in common and united all the animals likewise, he declared righteousness to be fellowship with equality."[83]

It was the evil Lawgiver God who introduced "mine and thine" and so promulgated private property rights and the institution of marriage. Since his law destroyed the fellowship of the Divine Law, in their liturgies the Carpocratians attempt to restore the Divine Law by uniting "as they will and with whom they will."[84] However, we do not know if this "love feast" of the Carpocratians was a ritual celebration of the basic equality between the sexes or whether they practiced intercourse indiscriminately, since the charge of fornication was a standard polemic of various religious groups against each other.[85]

Valentinianism belongs to a different type of Gnostic dualism. It holds that maleness and femaleness are not antagonistic opposites, but complementary.[86] This group places the origin of darkness, evil and dualism within the godhead itself "by means of a genealogy of personified divine states evolving from another, which describe the progressive darkening of the original Light in categories of guilt, error and failure."[87] Thus "the Valentinians did not identify the female with any absolute principle of evil, but rather with the fallible part of God, which became involved in the material world."[88] The Valentinian system begins with the Dyad Bythos=Primal Cause and Sige=Silence, who bring forth a couple, Nous and Truth. Though the primal Tetrad appears to consist of four different hypostases, Bythos and Sige as well as Nous and Truth form one single male-female substance or entity. The second Tetrad, Logos and Life and Man and Church, comes from the first Tetrad and brings forth in turn ten and twelve aeons. The ten aeons in the female series have names which allude to the union between man and woman, whereas the names of the twelve aeons in the male series recall the Christian virtues. The divine Pleroma thus consists of a series of male-female aeons. The last aeon, Sophia, plays the role of Cosmic Eve. Because of her ignorance and her desire to know the incomprehensible Father, she initiates a Fall in the Divine World that is the origin of the evil, visible world. Sophia is restored to the Pleroma, but her "abortion" cannot remain in the Pleroma. It is given form by Christ and the Holy Spirit and called Achamoth. Since Achamoth cannot enter the Pleroma, she falls into all sorts of distress. At her request the Savior, Jesus, is sent to give the "formation according to knowledge" and to release her from her passions. Achamoth can now give form to the Demiurge, who in due course fashions everything else. The Demiurge creates the human body first as incorporeal and

later puts a skin over it, but without his knowledge Achamoth introduces spiritual "seeds" in some humans. Humanity, therefore, consists of three classes of beings: the hylics, or "fleshly" ones; the psychics, who have souls; and the pneumatics, who have the spiritual seed from the Mother or Achamoth. The female and the male element were originally united. They are reunited when the female element becomes male, and are then united with the angels and enter into the Pleroma. "Therefore it is said that the woman is changed into a man and the Church here below into angels."[89] It is clear that "male and female" are not simple gender distinctions, but characterize mythological, archetypal realities.[90]

The Gnosticism of Marcus, a disciple of Valentinus, is distinguished by the fact that he places another Tetrad, called Unity, Oneness, Monad and One, before the thirty aeons. This first Tetrad is also called "the inconceivable and nonmaterial Father, who is without paternity and who is neither male nor female."[91] He claims that the "spiritual man," formed in the image and likeness of God, was masculine-feminine.[92] The Marcosians seem to have celebrated the sacraments of the "bridal chamber" and of baptism. They baptized into "the name of the unknown Father of all things, into Truth, the mother of all, into him who descended on Jesus, into union, into redemption, into the communion of the powers."[93]

The rite of the "bridal chamber" is related to the New Testament bridal and marriage imagery.[94] The celebration of the "spiritual marriage" in the Marcosian rite was a prefiguration of the perfect eschatological marriage union. At the end of the world-process, Achamoth will enter the Pleroma and receive the Savior as her bridegroom. The perfected "spiritual seed" will then be given as brides to the angels. The "spiritual marriage after the image of the unions above"[95] expresses in different terms what is meant by "becoming male." Thus the Valentinians had a very positive image of the marriage union and took it as a symbol and type

for salvation that restores the original androgynous unity of humanity. According to *The Gospel of Philip*,[96] a book which shows close affinities with the Marcosian teachings, when Eve was separated from Adam "death arose. When they reunite and he receives her to himself, death will be no more."[97] Christ came in order to remove the separation and unite the male and female.[98]

Marcus is reported to have had great success with women, which his opponents ascribed to his sorcery and love potions.[99] Yet it appears that his teaching was congenial to men as well as to women. He asked women at the Eucharistic *epiclesis* to speak the thanksgiving over the cup of mixed wine. Mixing the contents of the woman's cup with that of his own, he prayed: "May 'Grace' (*Charis*) who is before all things, who is beyond thought and description, fill thine inner being and multiply in thee her knowledge, sowing the mustard seed in good soil."[100] He understood himself to be a prophet, upon whom the first Tetrad had descended in female form,[101] and he ordained women as prophets with the following words:

> I desire to make thee a partaker of my Grace (*Charis*), since the Father of all doth continually behold thy angel before his face (Matt. 18:10). The place of thy greatness (angel) is ever in us: we must come together. First, receive from me and through me Grace. Adorn thyself as a bride who expects her bridegroom, that thou mayest be what I am, and I what thou art. Receive in thy bride-chamber the seed of light. Receive from me the bridegroom, and give him a place, and have a place in him. Behold Grace has descended upon thee; open thy mouth and prophesy.[102]

Irenaeus claims that Marcus especially deceived wealthy women of high rank in order to obtain their property and abuse them physically. Such a woman was prepared "to be united with him in everything, in order that she, with him, might enter into the One . . ."[103] It is apparent that Ire-

naeus no longer understood "the mystery of union" and the rite of the "bridal chamber" which was an "anticipation of the eschatological union between the spiritual gnostics and the angels." Such a misunderstanding was easily possible, since according to *The Gospel of Philip* the "holy kiss" was the center of the rite: "For the perfect conceive through a kiss and give birth. Because of this we also kiss another. We receive conception from the Grace (*Charis*) which is among us."[104] In the same Gospel Mary Magdalene is called the "consort of Christ" whom he loved "more than the disciples, and kissed her on her [mouth] often."[105] Since the Valentinian system knew three Christs and perceived the divine and the world in *syzygies* (couples), it is possible that Mary Magdalene was thought of as consort of the earthly Jesus, as the Holy Spirit was the consort of the aeon Christ in the Pleroma and Sophia was the consort of the Savior.

Gnosticism, we may conclude, employed the categories of "male" and "female," not to designate real women and men, but to name cosmic-religious principles or archetypes. Salvation in the radically dualistic Gnostic systems requires the annihilation and destruction of the female or the "feminine principle." In the moderately dualistic systems, salvation means the reunification of the male and female principle to an androgynous or asexual unity. In Gnosticism, the pneumatics, men and women, represent the female principle, while the male principle stands for the heavenly realm: Christ, God and the Spirit. The female principle is secondary, since it stands for the part of the divine that became involved in the created world and history. Gnostic dualism shares in the patriarchal paradigm of Western culture. It makes the first principle male and defines femaleness relative to maleness.[106] Maleness is the subject, the divine, the absolute; femaleness is the opposite or the complementary "other."[107] Gnostic dualism reflects the chasm between the world and the divine, the body and the spiritual self. We do not know whether this dualism also divided men from women and whether, in the rite of "the bridal chamber," men represented the male and women the female archetype. Since all Gnostics understand themselves as "female," it is possible that the ritual signifies overcoming this dualism for both men and women.

The Theological Justification for Rejection of Women's Leadership

Women were prominent in the church even after the middle of the second century. They participated in church leadership, not only as widows and deaconesses, but also as prophets and teachers. Women actually dared "to teach, to debate, to exorcise, to promise cures, probably even to baptize."[108] Their leadership and initiative were, however, more and more rejected by the patriarchal church: "No woman is allowed to speak in church, or even to teach, to baptize, or to discharge any man's function, much less to take upon herself the priestly office."[109]

Montanism, Gnosticism and the mainstream church all appealed to apostolic revelation and tradition to justify their own church order and theology.[110] Since the formation of the canon was still in flux,[111] certain groups considered so-called apocryphal writings as "Holy Scripture," whereas other groups rejected some of the Scriptural writings which were later acknowledged as canonical. To justify prophecy by women, the Montanists appealed to the succession of women prophets in the Scriptures, whereas some Gnostic groups rejected the Old Testament and part of our New Testament. Yet writings like *The Acts of Thecla* were long considered canonical, even by the mainstream church.

The canonical Gospels mention women, such as Mary Magdalene and Salome, as disciples of Christ. Gnostics built on these traditions to give the women disciples a special role in the reception of revelation and secret teaching. Mainstream Christianity, on the other hand, attempted to play down the significance of the women disciples and concen-

trated on figures like Peter and Paul and the Twelve. The debate between patriarchal and egalitarian Christian groups is reflected in various Gnostic texts which relate the competition between Peter and Mary Magdalene.[112]

Mary Magdalene is mentioned in all four canonical Gospels as the primary witness to the Easter faith event. She and the other women, whose names vary, were disciples of Jesus during his ministry and witnessed his death, burial and resurrection.[113] Yet Luke's Gospel already attempts to play down the role of women as proclaimers of the Easter kerygma, by stressing "that the words of the women seemed to the eleven an idle tale and they did not believe them" (Luke 24:11).[114] The motif of the apostles' skepticism toward the message of the women is even further developed in the *Epistula Apostolorum*, an apocryphal document of the second century. According to this account Mary Magdalene and Sarah (in the Coptic version it is Martha and Mary) are sent to announce to the apostles that Jesus had risen. But the apostles did not believe them. Finally, the Lord himself goes with Mary and her sisters to them, but they still do not believe. Only after they touch him do they know "that he has truly risen in the flesh."[115]

According to the *Sophia Jesu Christi*, the Redeemer appears after the resurrection to the twelve disciples and to the seven women who had followed him into Galilee.[116] Of the women disciples, only Mary Magdalene is expressly mentioned. The Redeemer teaches the male and female disciples about the "perfect one" and of "the will of the holy angels and of the Mother that the manly host may here be made perfect . . ."[117] The "manly host," in this text, are the Gnostics. Their salvation is willed by the angels, who represent the male principle in Valentinian Gnosticism. The Mother is Sophia, as can be seen in this text: "The Son of Man agreed with Sophia, his consort, and revealed himself in a [great light] as bisexual. His male nature is called the 'Savior,' the begetter of all things, but his female 'Sophia,' 'mother of all,' whom some call Pistis."[118] The conclusion is

typical of the Gnostic Gospels: "From that day on his disciples began to preach the Gospel of God, the eternal Father . . ."[119] It is apparent that women here are counted among the disciples who preach the Gospel.

Mary Magdalene, together with two other Marys, is mentioned in *The Gospel of Philip* (32) and in *The Dialogue of the Redeemer*,[120] whereas in *The Gospel of the Egyptians* Salome has a prominent role. In *The Great Questions of Mary* Christ gives revelation and secret teaching to his privileged disciple Mary Magdalene.[121] The vision reveals to Mary the prototype of the mystery rite of union practiced by various Gnostic groups. *The Gospel of Thomas* alludes to the antagonism between Peter and Mary Magdalene,[122] a theme more fully developed in the *Pistis Sophia* and in *The Gospel of Mary* (Magdalene).

In the *Pistis Sophia*[123] (third century) Mary Magdalene and John have a prominent place among the group of disciples.[124] Jesus stresses their outstanding role: "Mary Magdalene and John, the virgin,[125] will surprass all my disciples and all who shall receive mysteries in the Ineffable, they will be on my right and on my left and I am they and they are I."[126] Here we have the same formula as in the prayer of Marcus for the authority of women prophets. The other women disciples mentioned are Mary the mother of Jesus, Salome and Martha. Mary Magdalene asks most of the questions (thirty-nine out of forty-six) and plays a major role in giving interpretations. Peter's hostility toward her is apparent throughout the whole work. He objects: "My Lord, we shall not be able to endure this woman, for she takes our opportunity, and has not let any of us speak, but talks all the time herself."[127] Mary in turn complains that she hardly dares to interpret what has been said by the First Mystery. Peter intimidates her so much because "he hates the female race." Yet she is told that whoever receives gnosis and revelation is commanded to speak. It does not matter whether it is a man or a woman. The argument between Peter and Mary Magdalene clearly reflects the debate between the

mainstream church and Gnosticism on whether or not women have received apostolic revelation and are the legitimate transmitters of the apostolic tradition.

The controversy between Peter, the opponent of gnosis, and Mary Magdalene, the authority within gnosis, is even more pronounced in *The Gospel of Mary*[128] (second century). The first part of the work ends with the exhortation of the disciples by Mary Magdalene. After the departure of Jesus the disciples do not proclaim the Gospel because they fear they might suffer the same fate as did their Lord. Mary Magdalene then promises them that the Savior's "Grace" *(Charis)* will protect them and that they should not be afraid, because he has made them "to be men."

The second part begins with Peter asking Mary to share with them the revelations she has received from the Savior "who loved her above all women." But after Mary has told them of a vision, Andrew and Peter react in unbelief. Peter objects: "Did he then speak privily with a woman rather than with us and not openly? Shall we turn about and all harken to her? He has preferred her over against us?" Mary is offended by the reaction of Andrew and Peter to her revelation. She weeps and insists that she has not invented the visions and lied about the Savior. Levi comes to the defense of Mary Magdalene and rebukes Peter:

> "Peter, thou hast ever been of a hasty temper. Now I see thou dost exercise thyself against the woman like the adversaries. But if the Savior hath made her worthy, who then art thou to reject her? Certainly the Savior knows her surely enough. Therefore did he love her more than us. Let us rather be ashamed, put on the perfect Man, as he has charged us, and proclaim the Gospel . . ."[129]

This polemical dialogue reflects the opposition that Gnostics encountered when they appealed to Scriptural precedents, especially Mary Magdalene, as female transmitters and interpreters of the apostolic tradition. *The Gospel of Mary*, in turn, declares that whoever rejects the revelations and traditions transmitted under the name of a woman rejects the true revelation of the Savior himself and does not do the work of proclamation he has commanded. The followers of Andrew and Peter, who argue against the authority of women because of their contempt for "the female race," distort the true Christian message.

Various third- and fourth-century church orders reflect the patriarchal reaction against female leadership. The *Didascalia Apostolorum* maintains that women are not appointed by Jesus to teach and to proclaim Christ. The *Didascalia* does acknowledge that women were disciples and refers to three of them by the name Mary (Mary Magdalene, Mary the daughter of James, and the other Mary). The text, however, insists that the Lord "did not send them to instruct the people with us. For if it were required that women should teach, our Master Himself would have commanded these to give instruction with us."[130] The *Didascalia*, however, appeals to the women disciples when arguing for the ministry of deaconesses.

The *Apostolic Church Order* transmits a dialogue between the male and the female disciples on whether or not women can celebrate the Eucharist.[131] The dialogue is very similar to that between Peter, Andrew, Levi and Mary in *The Gospel of Mary*. Yet the tone is quite different. It is not just Peter and Andrew but also John, James and Mary herself who object to the Eucharistic ministry of women. Andrew introduces the question as to whether the apostles should organize a ministry for women. Peter acknowledges that some steps have been taken, but then poses the question of the Eucharistic ministry for women. John points out that at the Last Supper Jesus did not permit women to stand with the apostles, an argument already reflecting the priestly character of the minister of the Eucharist. (According to the New Testament Jesus "lay down at table" with his disciples.) Martha objects that this is not an argument against women, for Jesus did not let women stand beside the men because Mary

(who is early identified with Mary Magdalene) laughed. However, Mary rejects this argument of Martha. She argues against the Eucharistic ministry of women by quoting Jesus as saying, "The weak shall be saved through the strong," i.e., women through men and not vice versa. A woman herself is made to provide the theological argument against women's Eucharistic ministry.

Similarly, in *The Questions of Bartholomew*, Mary, the mother of Jesus, argues that women should pray standing behind men, because the Lord (actually Paul) said that the head of man is Christ, but the head of woman is man.[132] Later it appears that Mary herself is the sole exception to this, because she stands up and lifts up her hands in prayer to heaven.

Thus it appears that in the second and third centuries the leadership of women within the Christian community is still a very live and controversial issue.[133] Both parties, the opponents as well as the advocates of women's leadership roles, appeal to the apostolic tradition to make their point. The advocates refer to significant women, e.g., Mary Magdalene, Salome or Martha, and to passages such as Galatians 3:28 or Romans 16 to prove that Christian truth is based also on the apostolic authority of women. The patriarchal opposition cites the injunctions of 1 Corinthians 14:33b–36 and 1 Timothy 2:9–15 or the "household codes" for their view that women can occupy only subordinate positions limited to the care of women.

Those women whom the patriarchal writers could not erase from historical consciousness they declared frauds or heretics or interpreted from a patriarchal perspective. Origen, for example, acknowledges Phoebe, but reduces her to an assistant and servant of Paul and argues that women who do good works can be accepted as deaconesses.[134] Chrysostom affirms that women had leadership roles in the nascent Christian church, but maintains that only when the "angelic condition" existed could women travel in the service of the Gospel, prophesy and be called disciples or apostles.[135] But

these privileges applied solely in the primitive Christian communities.

Historical studies have demonstrated that the early Christian writers did not include all the extant materials in their writings, but selected and rewrote early Christian traditions that were important for their theological argument. Since the opponents of women's leadership in the church wrote from a patriarchal point of view, we can assume that they transmitted only a fraction of the rich traditions about significant women and their contributions in early Christianity. Most of the egalitarian traditions of primitive Christianity are probably lost. The few references to women's leadership that survived in patriarchal records are like the tip of an iceberg indicating the wealth of information that has vanished from historical consciousness.

Early Christian writings were shaped by a struggle between opposing groups over the equality of women. They cannot be taken as a complete history of the actual condition of women in the early church. The texts written to justify male leadership record the sad demise of the original Christian vision of oneness in Christ. Those that transmit remnants of the egalitarian tradition remind the mainstream church that the community founded by Jesus was meant to be one of mutual service of brother and sister, not one made in the image of the society where some "lord it over" others.

NOTES

1. Cf. the Biblical arguments of the *Declaration on the Question of the Admission of Women to the Ministerial Priesthood* and the Vatican's official press *Commentary* which were issued simultaneously by the Vatican Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (Jan. 27, 1977). For theological evaluations, cf. among others K. Rahner, "Priestertum der Frau?," *Stimmen der Zeit*, vol. CXII (1977), pp. 291–301, and J. R. Donahue, "Women, Priesthood and the Vatican," *America*, April 2, 1977, pp. 285–89, who points out: "The declaration correctly states that equality can coexist with

differentiation. But is there not a danger that differentiation may meld into discrimination when one group in the church (male ecclesiastics) tells the other group (women) exactly what their rights and roles are?" Cf. also the commentary edited by Arlene and Leonard Swidler, *Women Priests: A Catholic Commentary on the Vatican Declaration* (New York: Paulist Press, 1977). For the patriarchal stance of other Vatican documents, cf. the excellent review by Nadine Foley, "Woman in Vatican Documents, 1960 to the Present," in J. Coriden, *Sexism & Church Law: Equal Rights and Affirmative Action* (New York: Paulist Press, 1977), pp. 82–108.

2. Cf. J. G. Gager, *Kingdom and Community: The Social World of Early Christianity* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1975); G. Theissen, "Itinerant Radicalism: The Tradition of Jesus Sayings from the Perspective of the Sociology of Literature," *Radical Religion: The Bible and Liberation* (Community for Religious Research and Education, 1976), pp. 84–93; *idem*, *Soziologie der Jesus bewegung* (ThExH. 144; Munich: Kaiser, 1977); *idem*, "Soziale Schichtung in der korinthischen Gemeinde: Ein Beitrag zur Soziologie des hellenistischen Urchristentums," *Zeitschrift für Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, vol. LXV (1974), pp. 232–72; R. Scroggs, "The Earliest Christian Communities as Sectarian Movement," in J. Neusner (ed.), *Christianity, Judaism and Other Greco-Roman Cults*, vol. II (Leiden: Brill, 1975), pp. 1–23.

3. Cf. the "list of duties" for the office of bishop: he should be "one who governs his own house well and keeps his children in respectful obedience—for whoever does not know how to govern his own house, how can he take care of the church of God?" (1 Tim. 3:4–5). The patriarchal family is here the model for church structure.

4. H. v. Campenhausen, *Kirchliches Amt und geistliche Vollmacht in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1963); *idem*, "The Origins of the Idea of the Priesthood in the Early Church," in *Tradition and Life in the Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968), pp. 217–30; G. Dix, "The Ministry in the Early Church, *c*. A.D. 90–140," in K. Kirk (ed.), *The Apostolic Ministry* (London, 1964), pp. 183–303; J. L. Mohler, *The Origins and Evolution of the Priesthood* (New York, 1970); E. Schüssler Fiorenza, *Priester für Gott* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1972); A. E. Carr, "The Church in Process: Engendering the Future," in A. M. Gardiner (ed.), *Women and Catholic Priesthood: An Expanded Vision* (New York: Paulist Press, 1976), pp. 66–88, and the excellent research review by A. Lemaire, "The Ministries in the New Testament: Recent Research," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 3 (1973), pp. 133–66.

5. For a fuller development of this perspective, cf. my articles "Die Rolle der Frau in der urchristlichen Bewegung," *Concilium*, vol. VII (1976), pp. 3–9; "Interpreting Patriarchal Traditions," in L. Russell (ed.), *The Liberating Word: A Guide to Nonsexist Interpretation of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976), pp. 39–61; and "The Study of Women in Early Christianity. Some Methodological Considerations" (forthcoming).

6. Cf. R. Scroggs, "Paul and the Eschatological Woman: Revisited," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, vol. XLII (1974), p. 536; W. A. Meeks, "The Image of the Androgyne," *History of Religion*, vol. XIII (1974), pp. 165–208; H. D. Betz, "Spirit, Freedom and Law: Paul's Message to the Galatian Churches," *Svensk Exeg. Arsbok*, vol. XXXIX (1974), pp. 145–60; M. Bouttier, "Complexio Oppositorum: Sur les Formules de I Cor xii.13; Gal iii.26–8; Col iii.10, 11," *New Testament Studies*, vol. XXIII (1976), pp. 1–19.

7. R. Scroggs, "Paul and the Eschatological Woman," *loc. cit.*, has suggested that the opponents of Paul held that the baptismal formula eliminated the distinctions between the sexes, whereas Paul wants to eliminate the inequality between the sexes but not the distinctions (cf. 1 Cor. 7 and 11). However, Gal. 3:27f. does not eliminate sexual distinctions on the basis of creation, but eliminates specific gender roles within the community. Therefore it is not likely that the text is to be understood within the context of the Gnostic myth of the reunification of male and female, since "male and female" are here clearly parallel expressions to "Jew and Greek," "slave and free"; i.e., social relationships are meant. As the elimination of the societal religious distinctions between Jew and Greek becomes reality within the community of the baptized and is not just an eschatological hope, so is the elimination of specific gender roles a reality in the Christian community. Gal. 3:27f. therefore does not mean an eschatological utopian or an individualized and spiritualized Gnostic declaration but speaks about relationships within the Christian community.

8. For the connection of the *diakonein* motif with the Eucha-

eminence in their own circles, *used to entertaining and running their salons*, if that is what Paul's meetings were, as they saw best" (emphasis mine).

21. K. H. Schelkle, "Ministry and Ministers in the New Testament Church," *Concilium*, vol. XI (1969), pp. 5–11; A. Lemaire, "From Services to Ministries: Diakonia in the First Two Centuries," *Concilium*, vol. XIV (1972), pp. 35–49; J. Gnilka, *Der Philipperbrief* (Freiburg: Herder, 1968), pp. 35f.

22. The verb as well as the substantive "have the twofold sense of leadership and care." In the First Epistle of Clement of Rome, 36:1; 61:3 the substantive is used with reference to Christ, the High Priest. (B. Reicke, "*prohistemi*," *TDNT*, vol. VI, p. 703.)

23. Cf. "Patronage and Patronus," in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), pp. 790f.

24. The judgment depends on the decision whether or not 1 Cor. 11:2–16 is genuine Pauline. Cf. W. Munro, "Patriarchy and Charismatic Community in 'Paul,'" in Plaskow and Romero, *Women and Religion*, 2nd ed. (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1974), pp. 189–98; W. O. Walker, "1 Cor. 11:2–16 and Paul's View of Women," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. XCIV (1975), pp. 94–110, and the rejection of his attempt to declare 1 Cor. 11:2–16 as non-Pauline by J. Murphy-O'Connor, "The Non-Pauline Character of 1 Corinthians 11:2–16?," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. XCV (1976), pp. 615–21.

25. Almost all contributions that discuss the role of women in the New Testament grapple with this text. Cf. S. Lösch, "Christliche Frauen in Korinth," *Theologische Quartalschrift*, vol. CXXVII (1974), pp. 216–61; G. H. Gilbert, "Women in the Churches of Paul," *Biblical World*, vol. II (1893), pp. 38–47; E. Kähler, *Die Frau in den Paulinischen Briefen* (Zurich: Gotthelf, 1960); M. D. Hooker, "Authority on Her Head: An Examination of 1 Cor. 11:10," *New Testament Studies*, vol. X (1963–64), pp. 410–16; G. B. Caird, "Paul and Women's Liberty," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, vol. LIV (1972), pp. 268–81; W. J. Martin, "I Corinthians 11:2–16: An Interpretation," in Gasque and Martin (eds.), *Apostolic History and the Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), pp. 231–41; R. Scroggs, "Paul and the Eschatological Woman," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, vol. XL (1972), pp. 283–303; J. B. Hurley, "Did Paul Require Veils or the Silence of Women? A Consideration of 1 Cor. 11:2–16 and 1 Cor. 14:33b–36," *Westminster Theological Journal*, vol. XXXV (1972–73), pp. 190–220; A. Feuillet, "La Dignité et le rôle de la femme d'après quelques textes Pauliniens," *New Testament Studies*, vol. XXI (1975), pp. 157–91 (for an English abstract of this article, cf. "Is Paul anti-feminist?," *Theology Digest*, vol. XXIV [1975], pp. 29–35); A. Joubert, "Le Voile des femmes," *New Testament Studies*, vol. XVIII (1972), pp. 422–24; J. Galot, *Mission et ministère de la femme* (Paris: 1973), pp. 123ff.; V. Ramsay Mollenkott, *Women, Men and the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1977).

26. Cf. G. Fitzer, *Das Weib schweige in der Gemeinde: Über den unpaulinischen Charakter der mulier taceat Verse in 1 Kor. 14* (Munich: Kaiser, 1963). Cf. also H. Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), pp. 246f.; S. Aalen, "A Rabbinic Formula in 1 Cor. 14:34," in F. L. Cross (ed.), *Studia Theologica, II, 1* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1964), pp. 513–25; G. Dautzenberg, *Urchristliche Prophetie* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1975), pp. 257–73.

27. For the literature on the topic, cf. E. Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), pp. 154–63, and the notes above.

28. Cf. Dibelius and Conzelmann, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972), pp. 44–49 (literature); R. Falconer, "1 Timothy 2:14–15: Interpretative Notes," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. LX (1949), pp. 375–79.

29. Cf. Dibelius and Conzelmann, pp. 65ff. and 116, on the "false Teachers" of the Pastoral Epistles; R. J. Karris, "The Background and Significance of the Polemic of the Pastoral Epistles," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. XCII (1973), pp. 549–64.

30. C. Schlau, *Die Akten des Paulus und der Thekla* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1877); Hennecke and Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, vol. II (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1965), pp. 322–90, especially 353–64; E. Hazelton Haight, *More Essays on Greek Romances* (New York: Longdon, 1945), pp. 48–65.

31. Cf. Hennecke and Schneemelcher, pp. 331ff.

32. Tertullian, *De Baptismo*, 17: "But if certain Acts of Paul, which are falsely so named, claim the example of Thecla for allowing women to teach and to baptize, let men know that in Asia the presbyter who compiled that document, thinking to add of his own to Paul's reputation, was found out and though he professed he had done it for love of Paul was deposed from his position. How

could we believe that Paul should give a female power to teach and to baptize when he did not allow a woman even to learn in her own right? 'Let them keep silence,' he says, 'and ask their husbands at home.' "

33. Cf. M. Braun, *History and Romance in Greco-Roman Literature* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1938); P. J. Achtemeier, "Jesus and the Disciples as Miracle Workers in the Apocryphal New Testament," in E. Schüssler Fiorenza (ed.), *Aspects of Religious Propaganda in Judaism and Early Christianity* (Notre Dame University Press, 1976), pp. 149–86, especially 162ff.

34. R. Söder, *Die apokryphen Apostelgeschichten und die romanhafte Literatur der Antike* (1932; repr. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1969), pp. 119–47; Sr. M. R. Nugent, *Portrait of the Consecrated Woman in Greek Christian Literature of the First Four Centuries* (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1941), pp. 77–78, 81ff.

35. Cf. E. Cothenet, "Prophétisme et ministère d'après le Nouveau Testament," *La Maison Dieu*, vol. CVII (1971), pp. 29–50; cf. also the literature and research review in G. Dautzenberg, *Urchristliche Prophetie*, pp. 15–42.

36. For Luke's redaction of the Joel material in Acts 2:17–21, cf. R. F. Zehnle, *Peter's Pentecost Discourse* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1971), pp. 28–34, 125ff.

37. This motif was further developed in the patristic period. Cf. A. Grillmeier, "Maria Prophetin," *Revue des Études Augustiniennes*, vol. XI (1956), pp. 295–312.

38. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, III, 31.

39. *Ibid.*, 39.

40. Cf. L. Zscharnack, *Der Dienst der Frau in den ersten Jahrhunderten der christlichen Kirche* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1902), pp. 179–90.

41. Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.*, V, 17.

42. Justin, *Dialogus*, c, Tryph. 88.

43. Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, III, 11.

44. Hennecke and Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, vol. II, pp. 379f.

45. *Didache*, 10:7; 13:3; 15:1f.

46. M. E. Boring, "The Apocalypse as Christian Prophecy: A Discussion of the Issues Raised by the Book of Revelation for the Study of Early Christian Prophecy," *SBL Seminar Papers*, vol. II (Cambridge: Society of Biblical Literature, 1974), pp. 43–62.

47. It is generally assumed that the followers of "Jezebel" are identical with the Nicolaitans (Apoc. 2:2–7) and with "those who hold the teaching of Balaam" (2:14). Yet it is not clear what their relationship to the later Gnostic group of the Nicolaitans was. Cf. my article "Apocalyptic and Gnosis in the Book of Revelation and Paul," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. 92 (1973), pp. 565–81.

48. Cf. my article "The Quest for the Johannine School: The Apocalypse and the Fourth Gospel," *New Testament Studies*, vol. XXIV (1977), pp. 402–27, for the literature on the "school" question.

49. Most exegetes understand the address "elect lady" as a circumlocution for "church." However, the similarity in wording in Apoc. 2:20 and 2 John 1 suggests that the "elect lady" is the head of the community as "Jezebel" is the prophet-leader in the Apocalypse.

50. Cf. the excellent article by K. Thraede, "Frau," in *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, vol. VIII (Stuttgart, 1973), pp. 197–269, especially 254–66.

51. Epiphanius, *Haereses*, LI, 3.

52. Cf. H. Kraft, "Die altchristliche Prophetie und die Entstehung des Montanismus," *Theologische Zeitschrift*, vol. XI (1955), pp. 249–71; P. de Labriolle, *La Crise montaniste: Les Sources de l'histoire du montanisme* (Paris, 1913); *idem*, " 'Mulieres in Ecclesia taceant': Un Aspect de la lutte anti-montaniste," *Bulletin d'ancienne littérature et d'archéologie chrétiennes*, vol. I (1911), pp. 1–24, 103–22.

53. Epiphanius, *Haer.*; XLVIII, 1:3; XLVIII, 14:1.

54. Cf. H. Lietzmann, *History of the Early Church*, vol. I, pp. 200f.

55. Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.*, 16, 17. Cf. J. Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*, vol. I (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1971), pp. 105ff. But compare the severe judgment of Montanism by R. A. Knox, *Enthusiasm: A Chapter in the History of Religions* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950), p. 49: "The history of Montanism is not to be read as that of a great spiritual revival, maligned by its enemies.

It is that of a naked fanaticism, which tried to stampede the Church into greater severity . . ."

56. Cf. L. Zscharnack, *Der Dienst der Frau*, pp. 184ff.
57. Didymus the Blind, *On the Trinity*, III, 41:3.
58. Cyprian, *Epistolae* 75:10.
59. Epiphanius, *Haer.*, XLIX, 2.
60. Origen, *Fragment on 1 Cor. 74*.
61. Didymus, *On the Trinity*, III, 41:3.
62. *Apostolic Constitutions*, III, 6:1–23.
63. *Ibid.*, II, 58:4–6.
64. For an excellent review of church development in the question of women's ministry, cf. R. Gryson, *The Ministry of Women in the Early Church* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1976).
65. In the following section the English quotations of the texts are from W. Förster, *Gnosis: A Selection of Gnostic Texts*, vol. I, Engl. transl. ed. by R. McL. Wilson (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972).
66. K. Thraede ("Frau," *loc. cit.*, p. 237) maintains that Gnostic movements were known for the great participation of women in them. He suggests that the Gnostic dualism of "male and female" developed in reaction to the actual leadership of women in Gnosticism.
67. The standard work on Marcion is still A. v. Harnack, *Marcion: Das Evangelium vom fremden Gott* (1924; repr. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1960).
68. Epiphanius, *Panarion*, XLV, 2:1.
69. Cf. H. Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion: The Message of the Alien God and the Beginnings of Christianity*, 2nd enl. ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963), pp. 236f.; R. A. Baer, *Philo's Use of the Categories Male and Female* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), pp. 65–80.
70. Hennecke and Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, vol. I, pp. 166f.
71. Pseudo-Clementines, *Homilies*, II, 15:3.
72. Cf. G. Strecker, *Das Judenchristentum in den Pseudoklementinen* (Göttingen, 1958), pp. 35–96; J. Jervell, *Imago Dei: Gn 1, 26f. im Spätjudentum, in der Gnosis und in den Paulinischen Briefen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960), pp. 163f.
73. *Acts of Thomas*, 27.
74. Cf. L. Zscharnack, *Der Dienst der Frau*, pp. 156–79, especially 174f.
75. *Gospel of Thomas*, Log. 114. Cf. B. Gärtner, *The Theology of the Gospel of Thomas* (London: Collins, 1961), p.253: "In the Gnostic systems the man–woman relationship is motivated basically by the structure of the heavenly world, the male and female powers which are striving after unity."

76. Tertullian, *De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 6:6; 30:6; Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.*, IV, 13:2.
77. Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem*, III, 11.
78. Tertullian, *De Praescr. Haer.*, 30:6.
79. Cf. W. Förster, *Gnosis*, pp. 34–37; H. Kraft, "Gab es einen Gnostiker Karpokrates?," *Theologische Zeitschrift*, vol. VIII (1952), pp. 434–43.
80. Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.*, I, 25:1–6.
81. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis*, II, 2, no.6.
82. *Ibid.*, no.6:1.
83. *Ibid.*, no.8:1.
84. *Ibid.*, no.10:1.
85. These accusations were made by pagans and Jews against the Christians in general, by mainstream Christianity against Montanist and Gnostic groups and vice versa, but also by various Gnostic groups against each other. Cf. R. Haardt, *Gnosis: Character and Testimony* (Leiden: Brill, 1971), p. 69 fn.1.
86. Simonianism also belongs to this type. For the Helene/Ennoia figure, cf. the analyses of K. Beyschlag, *Simon Magus und die christliche Gnosis* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1974), pp. 134–64; G. Lüdemann, *Untersuchungen zur simonianischen Gnosis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975), pp. 55–81.
87. H. Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion*, p. 237.
88. R. A. Baer, *Philo's Use of . . . Male and Female*, p. 71.
89. Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.*, I, 23:3.
90. For the affinity of the Jungian system to the male-female principles of this second type of Gnostic dualism, cf. R. M. Stein, "Liberating the Feminine," in R. Tiffany Barnhouse and U. T. Holmes (eds.), *Male and Female* (New York: Seabury Press, 1976), pp. 76–86, and A. Belford Ulanov, "Jung on Male and Female," *ibid.*, pp. 197–210. Cf. also the feminist theological evaluation of this dualism by R. Radford Ruether, *New Woman, New Earth: Sexist Ideologies and Human Liberation* (New York: Seabury, 1975), pp. 151–59.
91. Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.*, I, 14:1.
92. Gn. 1:27; Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.*, I, 18:2.

93. Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.*, I, 23:3.
94. R. M. Grant, "The Mystery of Marriage in the Gospel of Philip," *Vigiliae Christianae*, vol. XV (1961), pp. 129–40.
95. Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.*, I, 21:3.
96. R. McL. Wilson, *The Gospel of Philip* (London: Mowbray, 1962); cf. also W. A. Meeks, "The Image of the Androgyne," *loc. cit.*, pp. 191–95.
97. Wilson, *Gospel of Philip*, 71.
98. *Ibid.*, 78.
99. Even L. Zscharnack, *Der Dienst der Frau*, pp. 171ff., repeats the judgment of Irenaeus that Marcus was a "sorcerer."
100. Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.*, I, 13:2.
101. *Ibid.*, 14:1.
102. *Ibid.*, 13:3.
103. *Ibid.*, 13:4.
104. Wilson, *Gospel of Philip*, 31.
105. *Ibid.*, 32, 35.
106. This is in my opinion overlooked by E. H. Pagels, "What Became of God the Mother? Conflicting Images of God in Early Christianity," *Signs*, vol. II (1976), pp. 293–303.
107. For the definition of woman as "other," cf. the classic work of S. de Beauvior, *The Second Sex* (New York: Knopf, 1953).
108. Tertullian, *De Praescr. Haer.*, XLI.
109. Tertullian, *De Virginibus Velandis*, IX. Cf. Ch. Stücklin, *Tertullian, De virginibus velandis* (Bern: H. Lang, 1974), pp. 189–203.
110. Cf. J. Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition*, vol. I, p. 109.
111. For the history of the formation of the canon, cf. the *Introductions to the New Testament*.
112. Cf. P. Perkins, "Peter in Gnostic Revelation," in *Proceedings of SBL: 1974 Seminar Papers*, vol. II (Washington: SBL, 1974), pp. 1–13, especially 1f.
113. Cf. M. Hengel, "Maria Magdalena und die Frauen als Zeugen," in Betz, Hengel and Schmid (eds.), *Abraham unser Vater* (Leiden: Brill, 1963), pp. 243–56, and my article "Mary Magdalene: Apostle to the Apostles," *UTS Journal*, April 1975, pp. 22ff.; U. Holzmeister, "Die Magdalenenfrage in der kirchlichen Überlieferung," *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie*, vol. XLVI (1922), pp. 402–22, 556–84.

114. C. F. Parvey, "The Theology and Leadership of Women in the New Testament," in R. R. Ruether (ed.), *Religion and Sexism* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974), pp. 117–49, attempts a short description of the passages on women in Luke and Acts but does not give a critical evaluation of Luke's theological tendencies.
115. Hennecke and Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, vol. I, pp. 195ff.
116. *Ibid.*, pp. 243–48.
117. *Papyrus Berolinensis*, 124:9f.
118. *Coptic Gnostic Library*, Codex I, 106:16–23. Cf. Hennecke and Schneemelcher, vol. I, p. 251.
119. *Papyrus Ber.*, 127:16.
120. Hennecke and Schneemelcher, vol. I, pp. 248ff.
121. *Ibid.*, p. 339; Epiphanius, *Panarion*, XXVI, 8:2–3.
122. *Gospel of Thomas*, Log. 114.
123. C. Schmidt, *Koptisch-Gnostische Schriften*, vol. I, *bearb.* W. Till (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1954); Hennecke and Schneemelcher, vol. I, pp. 250–59.
124. For the special role of Mary Magdalene and "John"(?) in the Fourth Gospel, cf. R. E. Brown, "Roles of Women in the Fourth Gospel," *Theological Studies*, vol. XXXVI (1975), pp. 688–99, and the popular account of S. M. Schneiders, "Apostleship of Women in John's Gospel," *Catholic Charismatic*, vol. I (1977), pp. 16–20. In the Fourth Gospel we also find a certain tension between Mary Magdalene and Peter or the Beloved Disciple and Peter.
125. For the theological understanding of "becoming a virgin" in Philo and in Gnosticism, cf. R. A. Baer, *Philo's Use of . . . Male and Female*, p. 75.
126. Chap. 96; cf. Schmidt and Till, *Koptisch-Gnostische Schriften*, vol. I, pp. 148.25ff.
127. Chap. 36; also chap. 72; see Schmidt and Till, 36.3–25 and 104.17–39.
128. Published in W. C. Till, *Die gnostischen Schriften des koptischen Papyrus Berolinensis* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1955), pp. 68–72; Hennecke and Schneemelcher, vol. I, pp. 340–44.
129. *Papyrus Ber.*, 18:1–21.
130. *Didascalia*, III, 6:2. Cf. R. H. Connolly, *Didascalia Apostolorum: The Syriac Version* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1929), p. 133. Also III, 6:1–2. Cf. F. X. Funk, *Didascalia et constitutiones*

Apostolorum (1905; repr. Turin, 1964), pp. 191, 8–18; transl. *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Buffalo: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885–96), vol. VII, p. 427.

131. *The Ecclesiastical Canons of the Apostles*, 24:1–28; English transl., J. P. Arendzen, "An Entire Syriac Text of the Apostolic Church Order," *Journal of Theological Studies*, vol. III (1902), p. 71.

132. Hennecke and Schneemelcher, vol. I, pp. 492f.

133. Cf. A. v. Harnack, *Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries*, vol. II (New York: Putnam, 1908), p. 64. He argues, however, that the opposition to Gnosticism and Montanism led in the church to the exclusion of women. In a similar fashion argues F. Heiler, *Die Frau in den Religionen der Menschheit* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1977), pp. 115f. Cf. also my article "Feminist Theology as a Critical Theology of Liberation," *Theological Studies*, vol. XXXVI (1975), pp. 605–26.

134. *Commentary on Romans*, 10:17 (PG 14, 1278A-C).

135. E. A. Clark, "Sexual Politics in the Writings of John Chrysostom," *Anglican Theological Review*, vol. LIX (1977), pp. 3–20, especially 15f.; D. F. Winslow, "Priesthood and Sexuality in the Post-Nicene Fathers," *The Saint Luke's Journal of Theology*, vol. XVIII (1975), pp. 214–27, argues that the Fathers took the incarnation seriously insofar as they were concerned with the whole person of Christ. However, they did not perceive that "sexuality was an integral part of the whole person. It follows that to deny the full participation in the life of the church to some persons (women) is to deny the reality of their full baptism into the one fully human articulation of God in Jesus Christ, as well as to deny the full 'assumption' of humanity of the incarnate Word" (p. 226).

TWO

Mothers of the Church: Ascetic Women in the Late Patristic Age

ROSEMARY RUETHER

This confrontation of the Christian affirmation with those of the surrounding cultures shows that the new vision of community was not just a heavenly ideal, but was accepted as a historical reality. Over against the patriarchal pattern of the "world," Christians understood themselves as a new community, in which all members shared equally in the freedom of the children of God[7] and in which privileged religious, class and gender roles were abolished. The patriarchal cultural paradigm was replaced by the vision of a community where people lived together in love and service.[8] Not only Gentiles and slaves but also women could be full and equal members of this community.

*Women as Founders and Leaders of Congregations**

Historians of early Christianity generally fail to notice the important role women played in founding and promoting house churches. Since the house church was a decisive factor in early Christian development,[9] it provided the leadership and determined the form of church life. In the house church the early Christians celebrated the Eucharist (Acts 2:46; 20:7) and preached the Gospel (Acts 5:42). The assembly was called the "house of God," the new "temple," because the Spirit dwelt in it.[10]

Wealthy women converts (cf. Acts 17:4,12) exercised decisive influence on these gatherings. Acts 12:12 refers to a specific prayer meeting in the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark. Paul greets Apphia, "our sister," who together with Philemon and Archippus was a leader of a house church in Colossae (Philemon 2). The church in Philippi was founded with the conversion of the businesswoman Lydia from Thyatira (Acts 16:14). The author of Colossians refers to Nympha of Laodicea and the "church in her house" (Colossians 4:15). Paul twice mentions the missionary couple Prisca (Priscilla) and Aquila and "the church in their house" (1 Corinthians 16:19; Romans 16:3–5). He wrote the first letter to the Corinthians in response to a report made by slaves who belonged to the household of a woman Chloe (1 Corinthians 1:11).[11]

* Throughout the chapter, references and spellings, etc., are to and from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

We have no reason to assume that women were excluded from the leadership of the house churches or from presiding at worship. The "household codes"[12] probably are a later patriarchal reaction to this leadership of women within the house churches.[13] This assumption is supported by 1 Timothy 2, where the injunctions that women should be submissive and not teach are given in the context of regulations for worship.

Paul explicitly mentions women as his missionary co-workers. The texts give no indication that these women were dependent on or subordinate to Paul. Only five of Paul's co-workers (Erastus, Mark, Timothy, Titus and Tychicus) "stand in an explicit subordination to Paul, serving him or being subject to his instructions."[14] The most common terms, e.g., "co-worker" (Prisca), "brother/sister" (Apphia), "*diakonos*" (Phoebe), and "apostle" (Junia), are also found in reference to women. The authentic Pauline letters equate co-workers and "those who toil." In 1 Corinthians 16:16ff. Paul admonishes the addressees to be "subject to every co-worker and laborer" and to give recognition to such persons. First Thessalonians 5:12 exhorts the Thessalonian Christians "to respect those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you." Paul uses the same Greek verb, "to labor" or "to toil," not only for his own missionary evangelizing and teaching but also for that of women. In Romans 16:6,12 he commends Mary, Tryphena, Tryphosa and Persis: they have "labored" hard in the Lord.

Paul affirms that women have worked with him on an equal basis. Philippians 4:2f. explicitly states that Euodia and Syntyche have "contended" side by side with him. As in an athletic competition, these women have competed with

Paul, Clemens and the rest of Paul's co-missionaries in the cause of the Gospel. Paul considers the authority of both women in the community at Philippi so great that their dissensions might be a serious threat to the existence of this community.[15] The texts indicate that these women missionaries commanded the same authority, esteem and respect as their male co-workers in the missionary communities.

One of Paul's most prominent co-workers is Prisca,[16] together with her husband, Aquila; like Barnabas or Apollos, she worked independently of Paul and was not under his authority. Paul declares that all the churches of the Gentiles have reason to be grateful to this missionary couple. They founded and led house churches in Corinth, Ephesus and Rome (if Romans 16 is addressed to that community). First Corinthians 16:19 has greetings from Aquila and Prisca. When Paul sends greetings to the couple (Romans 16:3f.) he addresses Prisca first, indicating that she is the leading figure (cf. also 2 Timothy 4:19).

In Acts, Prisca is also mentioned first. The references to her and Aquila (Acts 18:2ff.; 18:18,26) correspond with the information of the Pauline letters. Luke shows the importance of the couple and suggests that they were well known. They were by trade tentmakers and supported their missionary endeavor through their own work, which, like Paul's, made them independent of the churches that they served. They were expelled from Rome when Claudius banished the Jews from there. In Ephesus they converted Apollos, who would become one of the leading apostles alongside Paul (18:26).[17] Since Prisca is mentioned first in Acts 18:26, it was probably she who was primarily responsible for Apollos' conversion. Under her leadership Apollos learned "the way of God more accurately." The text clearly assumes that Prisca was the catechist and teacher of Apollos.

Whereas Prisca and Aquila are not directly called apostles, another couple, Andronicus and Junia, receives this title in Romans 16:7. There is no reason to interpret the name Junia as a short form of the male name Junianus, since Junia was

a well-known name for women at the time.[18] Andronicus and Junia are a missionary couple who had converted to Christianity before Paul. At the time of the writing of Romans 16, they are fellow prisoners of Paul and outstanding among the apostles. We know from 1 Corinthians 9:5 that Andronicus and Junia were not an exception, since the "other apostles" also had a "sister" with them as a "wife" (literally, a woman) on their missionary journeys. If the term "brother" denotes a particular group of missionary co-workers (cf. Philippians 4:21f.), there is no reason not to assume that these "sisters" were co-workers. Very likely many workers in the early Christian mission were couples.[19] When Paul stresses celibacy as the best precondition for missionary work (1 Corinthians 7:23ff.), he is expressing his own opinion, not the practice of the early missionary church.

Romans 16:1f. mentions another important woman, Phoebe. She receives two titles: *diakonos* of the church at Cenchreae and *prostatis* "of many and of myself as well." Exegetes have downplayed the significance of these titles when they refer to her. Wherever Paul uses the title *diakonos* for himself or another male leader, scholars translate it as "minister," "missionary" or "servant," whereas in the case of Phoebe they render it as "deaconess." After characterizing Phoebe as an "obviously well-to-do and philanthropic lady" Lietzmann goes on to say: "Even at that time there had long been women deacons in the Christian church who, when *their sex made them specially suitable*, came forward and gave signal help in caring for the poor and sick, and at the baptism of women"[20] (emphasis mine). Unconsciously Lietzmann here projects back into the first century the duties of the deaconess of a later period whose service was limited to the "ministry to women." Yet the text does not indicate any limitations of the office of Phoebe by prescribed gender roles. She is not the deacon of the "women" in the church at Cenchreae, but of the whole church.

Paul uses the term *diakonos* together with *synergos* (coworker), as can be seen in 1 Corinthians 3:5,9 and 2 Corin-

thians 6:1,4. According to 1 Corinthians 16:15 the co-workers and laborers are those who "have devoted themselves to the *diakonia* of the saints." The *diakonoi* appear to be not only itinerant missionaries but leaders in local congregations.[21] The term is used in the New Testament and also in secular sources to refer to preaching and teaching. Thus, the *diakonoi* served in a recognized official capacity as teachers and preachers in the Christian community.

The second title of Phoebe, *prostatis*, is usually translated as "helper" or "patroness," even though in the literature of the time it has the connotation of leading officer, president, governor or superintendent.[22] In 1 Thessalonians 5:12 the verb characterizes persons with authority in the community, and in 1 Timothy 3:4f. and 5:17 it designates the functions of the bishop, deacon or elder. Phoebe thus had a designated role of leadership and teaching in the community of Cenchreae. She was a person with great authority for many and for Paul himself. Like other missionaries, Phoebe received a letter of recommendation. It is possible that, as the *patrona*[23] of the church at Cenchreae, Phoebe, like other *patroni* of collegia (or clubs), traveled to Rome to defend there the interests of her community.

Paul's letters indicate that women were among the prominent and leading missionaries in the early Christian movement. They were co-workers with Paul but did not depend on him or stand under his authority. They were not excluded from any missionary function. They were preachers, teachers and leaders of the community. If we compare their ministry with those of the later deaconesses we have to stress that their ministry was not limited to the ministry to women nor to specific gender roles and functions. The prominence of women in the early Christian movement is confirmed by examining the list of names in Romans 16. Of the thirty-six persons mentioned, sixteen are women and eighteen men. The Pauline letters thus give us a glimpse of the egalitarian early Christian missionary movement.

The writings of the Pauline school, however, also transmit

the injunctions of a patriarchal reaction which, on theological grounds, decree the subordinate role of women. Whether or not Paul himself initiated this reaction is disputed.[24] Certainly, however, those who produced the justifications for the patriarchalization of Christian leadership were able to claim the authority of Paul without being challenged. Even though 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 concedes to women the gift of prophecy and liturgical functions, the passage nevertheless demands that women adapt to the role definition of their society. This demand is theologically justified by regarding the headship of God over Christ, Christ over man, and man over woman as a revealed hierarchy: God–Christ–man–woman.[25] For the sake of order the church order in 1 Corinthians 14:33b–36 forbids women to speak in the assembly and directs them to their husbands for religious instruction.[26]

The so-called household codes of the Deutero-Pauline literature uphold the patriarchal order of the family. These rules of conduct were universally accepted in Judaism and Hellenism and soon became a part of Christian theology.[27] According to them, women express and practice their Christian faith by observing the social-patriarchal order. In 1 Timothy 2:9–15 women are both commanded to keep silent and behave modestly, and explicitly forbidden to teach or to have any authority over men.[28] This ruling bases itself upon Genesis 2 and 3: Eve is second in the order of creation, and first in the order of sin. The author formulates this patriarchal theology for his community against a rival Christian group which had great success among women (2 Timothy 3:6) and probably accorded women teaching and leadership functions.[29]

The Acts of Paul and Thecla is a second-century writing devoted entirely to the story of a woman missionary.[30] In many regions this book was regarded as canonical in the first three centuries. It mentions a great number of women, besides the apostle Thecla. Thecla is converted by Paul. She takes a vow of continence and is persecuted for this by her

fiancé and her family. Condemned to death, she is saved by a miracle and goes with Paul to Antioch. A Syrian falls in love with Thecla, is rejected and takes revenge. When Thecla is condemned to fight with wild beasts, she baptizes herself in a pit full of water, whereupon, since the beasts do not harm her, she is set free. Her protectress, Tryphena, together with a part of her household, is converted to Christianity. Thecla proclaims the Word of God in the house of Tryphena, then follows Paul to Myra. After only a short while with him, she receives the commission "to teach the word of God" and goes to Iconium and from there to Seleucia, where she enlightens many with the Gospel.

Since Paul does not stand in the foreground of the narrative, the author of *The Acts of Paul and Thecla* appears to have incorporated independent traditions about Thecla. The image of the woman missionary depicted here is striking.[31] Thecla is commissioned by Paul to "go and teach the word of God." Women in Carthage at the beginning of the third century still could appeal to the apostle Thecla for women's authority to teach and to baptize.[32]

In other ways the picture of Thecla reflects typical feminine stereotypes. She falls in love with Paul, follows him and is dependent on him. On the other hand, her rejection of marriage brings her into conflict with the patriarchal values of her society. Motifs of the Hellenistic novel or romance are here taken over for missionary purposes.[33] We find the motif of "love at first sight," the separation motif, the theme of the "devoted couple," and faithfulness despite great pressures. Of course, in the Christian work the apostle and the woman are not sexual lovers but live in absolute continence.[34] Obviously these legends and stories could imagine women as preachers and missionaries only in romantic terms. Women renounce the old family and kinship ties, not for independent values of the faith but for a spiritual love relationship to the apostle. In the genre of romantic love, the woman is infatuated, follows the apostle, and remains faithful to him under the greatest pressures. Nevertheless, the picture of Thecla retains elements of the authority of early Christian women missionaries.

Women Prophets in Early Christianity

Prophets played an eminent role within the early Christian community. From the very beginning they functioned as inspired oracles of the resurrected Lord, their authority based on divine revelation communicated by the Spirit. Paul regards prophets as second only to apostles in the leadership of the church, and they were still regarded as the normative church leaders in some Christian communities in the mid-second century.[35] Paul takes for granted that women also act as prophets in the Christian assembly. He insists, however, that they do it in a proper way and do not overstep the gender differences between women and men (1 Corinthians 12:2–16).

In Luke it is declared that the Spirit is given to all Christians, to women as well as men (Acts 2:17f.).[36] In the infancy narrative Anna and Mary function as prophets.[37] He also refers to the four prophetess daughters of Philip (Acts 21:9). Eusebius tells us their fame was so great in the early church that the provinces of Asia argue for their apostolic origin by referring to the burial place of one of them in Asia Minor.[38] Papias of Hierapolis claims to have known them personally.[39]

In the second century the Montanists attempted to legitimate their prophecy by establishing a prophetic line of succession. They referred to an Asiatic prophet called Amnia, whose name was still highly respected at the end of the second century.[40] The anti-Montanist writer does not deny her prophetic ministry but claims her for the Catholics. He lists in his succession of recognized prophets Agabus, Judas, Silas, the daughters of Philip, Amnia in Philadelphia, Quadratus and some others.[41] At the beginning of the second century Justin affirms that Christian men and women

have charisms from the Spirit of God.[42] Irenaeus argued against the Alogoi, who denied the validity of prophecy, that Paul acknowledged prophetic women and men in the community.[43]

The Acts of Paul and Thecla mentions women prophets, like Theonoe, Stratonike, Eubulla, Phila, Artemilla and Numpha. At Corinth a prophet Myrta encouraged Paul and the community not to lose heart because Paul has to go to Rome. "The Spirit came upon Myrta, so that she said: . . . Paul the servant of the Lord will save many in Rome and will nourish many with the word . . . so that there will be great grace in Rome."[44] The references to the worship service show that she spoke in the Eucharistic assembly. Early Christian prophecy was liturgical prophecy. Paul's remarks in 1 Corinthians also suggest this. In the *Didache* the prophets are likened to the high priests and have the right to say the Eucharistic prayer. They are, as Spirit-filled persons, not bound to a liturgical formula, but can give thanksgiving freely as much as they want. Only if no prophets and apostles were present were the local ministers, bishops, presbyters and deacons entitled to take their place.[45] The author of the Apocalypse likewise understands himself as a prophet and insists that his "words of prophecy" be read aloud in the liturgical assembly.[46]

The author of the Apocalypse directs his criticism against a rival group of prophets (22:16). The opponents of the author seem also to have been organized in a school.[47] At the end of the first century a prophet-teacher whom the author calls "Jezebel" was the head of such a school in Thyatira. Her followers are characterized as disciples with the technical term "her children."[48] The same expression is used in 2 John 1, 4 and 13 to characterize the followers of the "elect lady" to whom the elder writes.[49] The Apocalypse characterizes "Jezebel" and her activity in language taken from the Old Testament prophets, which called the lapses of Israel into idolatry "adultery and whoredom."[50] In labeling the teacher-prophet "Jezebel" he insinuates that, like the Old

Testament queen, the prophet promoted idolatry and achieved her goals through seductive power and malevolent scheming.

The authority of this prophet and her "school," however, must have been well established in the community in which the author of the Apocalypse also had some followers (2:24). Despite the earlier warnings of John, the "school" of "Jezebel" continued to be a part of the community at Thyatira, and we can therefore assume that the school of this woman prophet was able to withstand the influence of John. Despite this attack on a particular school headed by a woman prophet, John did not discredit female prophecy as such. Asia Minor continued to recognize women as prophets even in the second and third centuries. The impact of the prophet-teacher "Jezebel" may be reflected in the fact that Thyatira later became a center of the Montanist movement, in which women prophets were prominent.[51]

Together with Montanus, Maximilla and Priscilla (or Prisca) were the leading prophets in Montanism.[52] They were not just his companions and followers, but enjoyed equal spiritual gifts and leadership in the Montanist movement. Like Montanus, the women prophets claimed that the Paraclete, or Holy Spirit, spoke directly to them, basing this claim on faith in revelations by the Holy Spirit given to women and men in prophetic ecstasy. The Montanists expected a speedy coming of the Lord and showed a passionate contempt for this world by advocating sexual asceticism, fasting, and martyrdom. The pronouncements of the first three prophets, Priscilla, Maximilla and Montanus, were written down and gathered as sacred documents similar to the words of the Old Testament prophets, the sayings of Jesus and the letters of the apostles.

The two best-known oracles of Priscilla and Maximilla are significant. When Prisca was asleep, Christ, in the form of a *female figure*, appeared to her saying that this was a holy place and here would Jerusalem descend out of heaven.[53] After the death of Montanus, Maximilla became the leader

of the movement. She was persecuted, and commissions were sent out in order to expose her as a fraud.[54] Her opponents attempted to raise doubts about the genuineness of the movement by testing her spirits. Maximilla complained bitterly: "I am pursued like a wolf out of the sheep fold; I am no wolf: I am word and spirit and power." Since the Montanist opponents could not refute the movement on doctrinal grounds, they attacked it by slandering its leading prophets. Charges of immorality and the abandonment of their husbands were brought against the women. It was claimed that Montanist leaders committed suicide and that in their mysteries they slaughtered children, whose blood was mingled in their sacrifices, a charge originally made by the pagans against all Christians.[55] Thus, despite their basic doctrinal orthodoxy, the Montanists were reviled and finally driven out of the mainstream church.[56]

The considerable literature against the Montanists focused its attack especially on the leadership of women. Since Maximilla and Priscilla were proof that the Holy Spirit spoke through the female sex, the Montanists admitted women to church "offices." Didymus maintains that the women prophets in Montanism taught and prophesied in the assembly of the community.[57] Firmilian knows of a Montanist prophetess in Asia Minor who, in A.D. 235, converted many lay people and clerics, and who also baptized and celebrated the Eucharist.[58] Montanists appealed to Galatians 3:28[59] and to the women prophets in Scripture to justify these practices. According to Origen, "those disciples of women, who chose as their master Priscilla and Maximilla, not Christ, the spouse of the Bride, appeal to the following women prophets: the daughters of Philip, Deborah, Mary the sister of Aaron, Hulda, and Anna the daughter of Panuel."[60] Origen refutes this tradition by arguing that these women prophets did not speak in public or in the assemblies.

Scriptural texts cited against the leadership of women by Church Fathers are especially 1 Corinthians 14:34f., 1 Timothy 2:12ff. and 1 Corinthians 11:3,5. The argument against

the prophetic leadership of women is summarized in the comments of Didymus the Blind on 1 Timothy 2:14:

> Scripture recognizes as prophetesses the four daughters of Philip, Deborah, Mary, the sister of Aaron, and Mary, the mother of God, who said as recorded in the Gospel: "Henceforth all *women* [emphasis mine] and all generations shall call me blessed." But in Scripture there are no books written in their name. On the contrary, the Apostle says in First Timothy: "I do not permit women to teach," and again in First Corinthians: "Every woman who prays or prophesies with uncovered head dishonors her head." He means that he does not permit a woman to write books impudently on her own authority, nor to teach in the assemblies, because by doing so, she offends her head man; for "the head of woman is man and the head of man is Christ." The reason for this silence imposed on women is obvious: woman's teaching in the beginning caused considerable havoc to the human race; for the Apostle writes: "It is not the man who deceived, but the woman."[61]

Yet the mainstream church also appealed to the women prophets of Scripture to justify the minor role which they accorded women. The *Apostolic Constitutions* of the fourth century categorically declared: "We do not permit our women to teach in the Church, but only to pray and hear those that teach," and they limit the liturgical ministry of the deaconess to the functions of keeping the doors and assisting the "presbyters in the baptism of women for reasons of decency."[62] The prayer of ordination of women to these minor roles reads:

> O Eternal God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Creator of man and woman, who replenished with the Spirit Miriam and Deborah and Anna, and Hulda; who did not disdain that Thy only begotten Son should be born of a woman; who also in the tabernacle of the testimony and in the temple, did ordain women to be keepers of Thy holy gates . . .[63]

This church order thus accepts the Montanist appeal to the women prophets of Scripture, but uses their argument to justify a secondary role for women in the church.[64]

Women and the Divine Female Principle in Gnostic Communities[65]

Despite the standard complaint of the Church Fathers that women were prominent in Gnostic groups, we have very little information about the actual status and role of women in such communities.[66] We can attempt here only a sketch of the images of male and female in Gnosticism and the roles accorded women in these groups.

Whether or not Marcion[67] be called a Gnostic is disputed. He distinguished the alien God of Goodness, the Father of Jesus Christ, from the World God of Justice, who is the antithesis of the Good God. The Demiurge, or World God, created the cosmos and humankind, but the Good God is absolutely alien to all created things. Human creatures belong bodily and psychically to the World God. Christ came to save them from the World God and to make them children of the alien Good God. Since the Marcionites rejected the created world, they were devoted to rigorous asceticism, and by protesting against flesh and matter they demonstrated that they did not owe allegiance to the World God. Because procreation strengthens the sphere of the Demiurge, they did not marry and have children.

Severus, an associate of Marcion, taught "that woman is the work of Satan. . . . Hence those who consort in marriage fulfill the work of Satan."[68] Marcionism belongs to the type of Gnosticism that starts from a dualism of two opposed principles.[69] In this system femaleness belongs to the sphere of creation, whereas maleness stands for heavenly transcendent realities. In *The Gospel of the Egyptians* a saying of the Savior is quoted: "I am come to destroy the works of the

female, by the 'female' meaning lust, and by the 'works' birth and decay."[70]

The classic expression of this dualism of two opposed principles or pairs of opposites is found in terms of male and female in the Pseudo-Clementines: "The present world is female, as the mother bringing forth the souls of the children, but the world to come is male, as a father receiving his children."[71] Therefore, of the two types of prophets in the world, one type is the female, whose words accord entirely with the created world, and the other type is the male prophet who speaks for the coming, higher world.[72] In the encratite *Acts of Thomas* the "communion of the male" is a parallel expression to the "highest gift of grace," "Holy Spirit" or "the power of the Most High."[73] The categories "female and male," therefore, do not so much characterize actual women or men as denote opposite types of dualistic principles.

The Marcionites were well organized, with a hierarchy of bishops and priests. We do not know much about the actual role of women in Marcion's church, but he is said to have appointed women to all church offices on an equal basis with men.[74] A saying of *The Gospel of Thomas* about Mary Magdalene could be applied to these women. In *The Gospel of Thomas* Simon Peter demands that Mary Magdalene leave the circle of disciples, "because women are not worthy of life." Jesus responds, "See, I shall lead her, so that I make her a man. That she too may become a living spirit, who is like you men. For every woman who makes herself a man shall enter the kingdom of heaven."[75]

Apelles, another member of the school of Marcion, revised his teacher's radical dualism. He was influenced by Philumene, an ascetic virgin and prophet at Rome, who supposedly encouraged Apelles to found a new sect.[76] Tertullian therefore calls her not only prophet but also the "*praeceptrix* and *magistra*" of Apelles.[77] Philumene taught and also accompanied Apelles on his various trips, and in the commu-

nities of Apelles her writings were acknowledged as "Holy Scripture."[78]

Like the Marcionites, the Carpocratians distinguish between the unbegotten Father and the God who gave the Law.[79] Since they believe in the migration of the soul, they hold that they can be liberated from the body and from reincarnation not through asceticism but through libertinism. All things are indifferent, and nothing in the world is by nature evil. Not through obedience to laws, however, but only through faith and love are persons saved.[80] The Carpocratians appeal to Salome, Mary Magdalene and Martha as the source and guarantors of their traditions. One of their teachers, Marcellina, represented their teaching in Rome in the middle of the second century and acquired many followers there.

The son of Carpocrates, Epiphanes, taught that the "righteousness of God is communion with equality."[81] Since God provided for all beings equally, no distinction should be made between "rich and poor, people and ruler, foolish and wise, female and male, free and slave."[82] Epiphanes thus espouses the same ideal as Paul (Galatians 3:27f.), but argues the fundamental equality of all, not on the basis of baptism, but on the basis of creation. Therefore his "fellowship with equality" extends not only to gender roles in the Christian community but also to sexuality and marriage. "In that God made all things in common for man and brought together the female with the male in common and united all the animals likewise, he declared righteousness to be fellowship with equality."[83]

It was the evil Lawgiver God who introduced "mine and thine" and so promulgated private property rights and the institution of marriage. Since his law destroyed the fellowship of the Divine Law, in their liturgies the Carpocratians attempt to restore the Divine Law by uniting "as they will and with whom they will."[84] However, we do not know if this "love feast" of the Carpocratians was a ritual celebration of the basic equality between the sexes or whether they prac-

ticed intercourse indiscriminately, since the charge of fornication was a standard polemic of various religious groups against each other.[85]

Valentinianism belongs to a different type of Gnostic dualism. It holds that maleness and femaleness are not antagonistic opposites, but complementary.[86] This group places the origin of darkness, evil and dualism within the godhead itself "by means of a genealogy of personified divine states evolving from another, which describe the progressive darkening of the original Light in categories of guilt, error and failure."[87] Thus "the Valentinians did not identify the female with any absolute principle of evil, but rather with the fallible part of God, which became involved in the material world."[88] The Valentinian system begins with the Dyad Bythos=Primal Cause and Sige=Silence, who bring forth a couple, Nous and Truth. Though the primal Tetrad appears to consist of four different hypostases, Bythos and Sige as well as Nous and Truth form one single male-female substance or entity. The second Tetrad, Logos and Life and Man and Church, comes from the first Tetrad and brings forth in turn ten and twelve aeons. The ten aeons in the female series have names which allude to the union between man and woman, whereas the names of the twelve aeons in the male series recall the Christian virtues. The divine Pleroma thus consists of a series of male-female aeons. The last aeon, Sophia, plays the role of Cosmic Eve. Because of her ignorance and her desire to know the incomprehensible Father, she initiates a Fall in the Divine World that is the origin of the evil, visible world. Sophia is restored to the Pleroma, but her "abortion" cannot remain in the Pleroma. It is given form by Christ and the Holy Spirit and called Achamoth. Since Achamoth cannot enter the Pleroma, she falls into all sorts of distress. At her request the Savior, Jesus, is sent to give the "formation according to knowledge" and to release her from her passions. Achamoth can now give form to the Demiurge, who in due course fashions everything else. The Demiurge creates the human body first as incorporeal and

later puts a skin over it, but without his knowledge Achamoth introduces spiritual "seeds" in some humans. Humanity, therefore, consists of three classes of beings: the hylics, or "fleshly" ones; the psychics, who have souls; and the pneumatics, who have the spiritual seed from the Mother or Achamoth. The female and the male element were originally united. They are reunited when the female element becomes male, and are then united with the angels and enter into the Pleroma. "Therefore it is said that the woman is changed into a man and the Church here below into angels."[89] It is clear that "male and female" are not simple gender distinctions, but characterize mythological, archetypal realities.[90]

The Gnosticism of Marcus, a disciple of Valentinus, is distinguished by the fact that he places another Tetrad, called Unity, Oneness, Monad and One, before the thirty aeons. This first Tetrad is also called "the inconceivable and nonmaterial Father, who is without paternity and who is neither male nor female."[91] He claims that the "spiritual man," formed in the image and likeness of God, was masculine-feminine.[92] The Marcosians seem to have celebrated the sacraments of the "bridal chamber" and of baptism. They baptized into "the name of the unknown Father of all things, into Truth, the mother of all, into him who descended on Jesus, into union, into redemption, into the communion of the powers."[93]

The rite of the "bridal chamber" is related to the New Testament bridal and marriage imagery.[94] The celebration of the "spiritual marriage" in the Marcosian rite was a prefiguration of the perfect eschatological marriage union. At the end of the world-process, Achamoth will enter the Pleroma and receive the Savior as her bridegroom. The perfected "spiritual seed" will then be given as brides to the angels. The "spiritual marriage after the image of the unions above"[95] expresses in different terms what is meant by "becoming male." Thus the Valentinians had a very positive image of the marriage union and took it as a symbol and type

for salvation that restores the original androgynous unity of humanity. According to *The Gospel of Philip*,[96] a book which shows close affinities with the Marcosian teachings, when Eve was separated from Adam "death arose. When they reunite and he receives her to himself, death will be no more."[97] Christ came in order to remove the separation and unite the male and female.[98]

Marcus is reported to have had great success with women, which his opponents ascribed to his sorcery and love potions.[99] Yet it appears that his teaching was congenial to men as well as to women. He asked women at the Eucharistic *epiclesis* to speak the thanksgiving over the cup of mixed wine. Mixing the contents of the woman's cup with that of his own, he prayed: "May 'Grace' (*Charis*) who is before all things, who is beyond thought and description, fill thine inner being and multiply in thee her knowledge, sowing the mustard seed in good soil."[100] He understood himself to be a prophet, upon whom the first Tetrad had descended in female form,[101] and he ordained women as prophets with the following words:

> I desire to make thee a partaker of my Grace (*Charis*), since the Father of all doth continually behold thy angel before his face (Matt. 18:10). The place of thy greatness (angel) is ever in us: we must come together. First, receive from me and through me Grace. Adorn thyself as a bride who expects her bridegroom, that thou mayest be what I am, and I what thou art. Receive in thy bride-chamber the seed of light. Receive from me the bridegroom, and give him a place, and have a place in him. Behold Grace has descended upon thee; open thy mouth and prophesy.[102]

Irenaeus claims that Marcus especially deceived wealthy women of high rank in order to obtain their property and abuse them physically. Such a woman was prepared "to be united with him in everything, in order that she, with him, might enter into the One . . ."[103] It is apparent that Ire-

naeus no longer understood "the mystery of union" and the rite of the "bridal chamber" which was an "anticipation of the eschatological union between the spiritual gnostics and the angels." Such a misunderstanding was easily possible, since according to *The Gospel of Philip* the "holy kiss" was the center of the rite: "For the perfect conceive through a kiss and give birth. Because of this we also kiss another. We receive conception from the Grace (*Charis*) which is among us."[104] In the same Gospel Mary Magdalene is called the "consort of Christ" whom he loved "more than the disciples, and kissed her on her [mouth] often."[105] Since the Valentinian system knew three Christs and perceived the divine and the world in *syzygies* (couples), it is possible that Mary Magdalene was thought of as consort of the earthly Jesus, as the Holy Spirit was the consort of the aeon Christ in the Pleroma and Sophia was the consort of the Savior.

Gnosticism, we may conclude, employed the categories of "male" and "female," not to designate real women and men, but to name cosmic-religious principles or archetypes. Salvation in the radically dualistic Gnostic systems requires the annihilation and destruction of the female or the "feminine principle." In the moderately dualistic systems, salvation means the reunification of the male and female principle to an androgynous or asexual unity. In Gnosticism, the pneumatics, men and women, represent the female principle, while the male principle stands for the heavenly realm: Christ, God and the Spirit. The female principle is secondary, since it stands for the part of the divine that became involved in the created world and history. Gnostic dualism shares in the patriarchal paradigm of Western culture. It makes the first principle male and defines femaleness relative to maleness.[106] Maleness is the subject, the divine, the absolute; femaleness is the opposite or the complementary "other."[107] Gnostic dualism reflects the chasm between the world and the divine, the body and the spiritual self. We do not know whether this dualism also divided men from women and whether, in the rite of "the bridal chamber," men represented the male and women the female archetype. Since all Gnostics understand themselves as "female," it is possible that the ritual signifies overcoming this dualism for both men and women.

The Theological Justification for Rejection of Women's Leadership

Women were prominent in the church even after the middle of the second century. They participated in church leadership, not only as widows and deaconesses, but also as prophets and teachers. Women actually dared "to teach, to debate, to exorcise, to promise cures, probably even to baptize."[108] Their leadership and initiative were, however, more and more rejected by the patriarchal church: "No woman is allowed to speak in church, or even to teach, to baptize, or to discharge any man's function, much less to take upon herself the priestly office."[109]

Montanism, Gnosticism and the mainstream church all appealed to apostolic revelation and tradition to justify their own church order and theology.[110] Since the formation of the canon was still in flux,[111] certain groups considered so-called apocryphal writings as "Holy Scripture," whereas other groups rejected some of the Scriptural writings which were later acknowledged as canonical. To justify prophecy by women, the Montanists appealed to the succession of women prophets in the Scriptures, whereas some Gnostic groups rejected the Old Testament and part of our New Testament. Yet writings like *The Acts of Thecla* were long considered canonical, even by the mainstream church.

The canonical Gospels mention women, such as Mary Magdalene and Salome, as disciples of Christ. Gnostics built on these traditions to give the women disciples a special role in the reception of revelation and secret teaching. Mainstream Christianity, on the other hand, attempted to play down the significance of the women disciples and concen-

trated on figures like Peter and Paul and the Twelve. The debate between patriarchal and egalitarian Christian groups is reflected in various Gnostic texts which relate the competition between Peter and Mary Magdalene.[112]

Mary Magdalene is mentioned in all four canonical Gospels as the primary witness to the Easter faith event. She and the other women, whose names vary, were disciples of Jesus during his ministry and witnessed his death, burial and resurrection.[113] Yet Luke's Gospel already attempts to play down the role of women as proclaimers of the Easter kerygma, by stressing "that the words of the women seemed to the eleven an idle tale and they did not believe them" (Luke 24:11).[114] The motif of the apostles' skepticism toward the message of the women is even further developed in the *Epistula Apostolorum*, an apocryphal document of the second century. According to this account Mary Magdalene and Sarah (in the Coptic version it is Martha and Mary) are sent to announce to the apostles that Jesus had risen. But the apostles did not believe them. Finally, the Lord himself goes with Mary and her sisters to them, but they still do not believe. Only after they touch him do they know "that he has truly risen in the flesh." [115]

According to the *Sophia Jesu Christi*, the Redeemer appears after the resurrection to the twelve disciples and to the seven women who had followed him into Galilee.[116] Of the women disciples, only Mary Magdalene is expressly mentioned. The Redeemer teaches the male and female disciples about the "perfect one" and of "the will of the holy angels and of the Mother that the manly host may here be made perfect . . ." [117] The "manly host," in this text, are the Gnostics. Their salvation is willed by the angels, who represent the male principle in Valentinian Gnosticism. The Mother is Sophia, as can be seen in this text: "The Son of Man agreed with Sophia, his consort, and revealed himself in a [great light] as bisexual. His male nature is called the 'Savior,' the begetter of all things, but his female 'Sophia,' 'mother of all,' whom some call Pistis." [118] The conclusion is

typical of the Gnostic Gospels: "From that day on his disciples began to preach the Gospel of God, the eternal Father . . ." [119] It is apparent that women here are counted among the disciples who preach the Gospel.

Mary Magdalene, together with two other Marys, is mentioned in *The Gospel of Philip* (32) and in *The Dialogue of the Redeemer*,[120] whereas in *The Gospel of the Egyptians* Salome has a prominent role. In *The Great Questions of Mary* Christ gives revelation and secret teaching to his privileged disciple Mary Magdalene.[121] The vision reveals to Mary the prototype of the mystery rite of union practiced by various Gnostic groups. *The Gospel of Thomas* alludes to the antagonism between Peter and Mary Magdalene,[122] a theme more fully developed in the *Pistis Sophia* and in *The Gospel of Mary* (Magdalene).

In the *Pistis Sophia*[123] (third century) Mary Magdalene and John have a prominent place among the group of disciples.[124] Jesus stresses their outstanding role: "Mary Magdalene and John, the virgin,[125] will surpass all my disciples and all who shall receive mysteries in the Ineffable, they will be on my right and on my left and I am they and they are I." [126] Here we have the same formula as in the prayer of Marcus for the authority of women prophets. The other women disciples mentioned are Mary the mother of Jesus, Salome and Martha. Mary Magdalene asks most of the questions (thirty-nine out of forty-six) and plays a major role in giving interpretations. Peter's hostility toward her is apparent throughout the whole work. He objects: "My Lord, we shall not be able to endure this woman, for she takes our opportunity, and has not let any of us speak, but talks all the time herself." [127] Mary in turn complains that she hardly dares to interpret what has been said by the First Mystery. Peter intimidates her so much because "he hates the female race." Yet she is told that whoever receives gnosis and revelation is commanded to speak. It does not matter whether it is a man or a woman. The argument between Peter and Mary Magdalene clearly reflects the debate between the

mainstream church and Gnosticism on whether or not women have received apostolic revelation and are the legitimate transmitters of the apostolic tradition.

The controversy between Peter, the opponent of gnosis, and Mary Magdalene, the authority within gnosis, is even more pronounced in *The Gospel of Mary* [128] (second century). The first part of the work ends with the exhortation of the disciples by Mary Magdalene. After the departure of Jesus the disciples do not proclaim the Gospel because they fear they might suffer the same fate as did their Lord. Mary Magdalene then promises them that the Savior's "Grace" *(Charis)* will protect them and that they should not be afraid, because he has made them "to be men."

The second part begins with Peter asking Mary to share with them the revelations she has received from the Savior "who loved her above all women." But after Mary has told them of a vision, Andrew and Peter react in unbelief. Peter objects: "Did he then speak privily with a woman rather than with us and not openly? Shall we turn about and all harken to her? He has preferred her over against us?" Mary is offended by the reaction of Andrew and Peter to her revelation. She weeps and insists that she has not invented the visions and lied about the Savior. Levi comes to the defense of Mary Magdalene and rebukes Peter:

"Peter, thou hast ever been of a hasty temper. Now I see thou dost exercise thyself against the woman like the adversaries. But if the Savior hath made her worthy, who then art thou to reject her? Certainly the Savior knows her surely enough. Therefore did he love her more than us. Let us rather be ashamed, put on the perfect Man, as he has charged us, and proclaim the Gospel . . ." [129]

This polemical dialogue reflects the opposition that Gnostics encountered when they appealed to Scriptural precedents, especially Mary Magdalene, as female transmitters and interpreters of the apostolic tradition. *The Gospel of Mary*, in turn, declares that whoever rejects the revelations and traditions transmitted under the name of a woman rejects the true revelation of the Savior himself and does not do the work of proclamation he has commanded. The followers of Andrew and Peter, who argue against the authority of women because of their contempt for "the female race," distort the true Christian message.

Various third- and fourth-century church orders reflect the patriarchal reaction against female leadership. The *Didascalia Apostolorum* maintains that women are not appointed by Jesus to teach and to proclaim Christ. The *Didascalia* does acknowledge that women were disciples and refers to three of them by the name Mary (Mary Magdalene, Mary the daughter of James, and the other Mary). The text, however, insists that the Lord "did not send them to instruct the people with us. For if it were required that women should teach, our Master Himself would have commanded these to give instruction with us." [130]The *Didascalia*, however, appeals to the women disciples when arguing for the ministry of deaconesses.

The *Apostolic Church Order* transmits a dialogue between the male and the female disciples on whether or not women can celebrate the Eucharist.[131] The dialogue is very similar to that between Peter, Andrew, Levi and Mary in *The Gospel of Mary*. Yet the tone is quite different. It is not just Peter and Andrew but also John, James and Mary herself who object to the Eucharistic ministry of women. Andrew introduces the question as to whether the apostles should organize a ministry for women. Peter acknowledges that some steps have been taken, but then poses the question of the Eucharistic ministry for women. John points out that at the Last Supper Jesus did not permit women to stand with the apostles, an argument already reflecting the priestly character of the minister of the Eucharist. (According to the New Testament Jesus "lay down at table" with his disciples.) Martha objects that this is not an argument against women, for Jesus did not let women stand beside the men because Mary

(who is early identified with Mary Magdalene) laughed. However, Mary rejects this argument of Martha. She argues against the Eucharistic ministry of women by quoting Jesus as saying, "The weak shall be saved through the strong," i.e., women through men and not vice versa. A woman herself is made to provide the theological argument against women's Eucharistic ministry.

Similarly, in *The Questions of Bartholomew*, Mary, the mother of Jesus, argues that women should pray standing behind men, because the Lord (actually Paul) said that the head of man is Christ, but the head of woman is man.[132] Later it appears that Mary herself is the sole exception to this, because she stands up and lifts up her hands in prayer to heaven.

Thus it appears that in the second and third centuries the leadership of women within the Christian community is still a very live and controversial issue.[133] Both parties, the opponents as well as the advocates of women's leadership roles, appeal to the apostolic tradition to make their point. The advocates refer to significant women, e.g., Mary Magdalene, Salome or Martha, and to passages such as Galatians 3:28 or Romans 16 to prove that Christian truth is based also on the apostolic authority of women. The patriarchal opposition cites the injunctions of 1 Corinthians 14:33b–36 and 1 Timothy 2:9–15 or the "household codes" for their view that women can occupy only subordinate positions limited to the care of women.

Those women whom the patriarchal writers could not erase from historical consciousness they declared frauds or heretics or interpreted from a patriarchal perspective. Origen, for example, acknowledges Phoebe, but reduces her to an assistant and servant of Paul and argues that women who do good works can be accepted as deaconesses.[134] Chrysostom affirms that women had leadership roles in the nascent Christian church, but maintains that only when the "angelic condition" existed could women travel in the service of the Gospel, prophesy and be called disciples or apostles.[135] But

these privileges applied solely in the primitive Christian communities.

Historical studies have demonstrated that the early Christian writers did not include all the extant materials in their writings, but selected and rewrote early Christian traditions that were important for their theological argument. Since the opponents of women's leadership in the church wrote from a patriarchal point of view, we can assume that they transmitted only a fraction of the rich traditions about significant women and their contributions in early Christianity. Most of the egalitarian traditions of primitive Christianity are probably lost. The few references to women's leadership that survived in patriarchal records are like the tip of an iceberg indicating the wealth of information that has vanished from historical consciousness.

Early Christian writings were shaped by a struggle between opposing groups over the equality of women. They cannot be taken as a complete history of the actual condition of women in the early church. The texts written to justify male leadership record the sad demise of the original Christian vision of oneness in Christ. Those that transmit remnants of the egalitarian tradition remind the mainstream church that the community founded by Jesus was meant to be one of mutual service of brother and sister, not one made in the image of the society where some "lord it over" others.

NOTES

1. Cf. the Biblical arguments of the *Declaration on the Question of the Admission of Women to the Ministerial Priesthood* and the Vatican's official press *Commentary* which were issued simultaneously by the Vatican Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (Jan. 27, 1977). For theological evaluations, cf. among others K. Rahner, "Priestertum der Frau?," *Stimmen der Zeit*, vol. CXII (1977), pp. 291–301, and J. R. Donahue, "Women, Priesthood and the Vatican," *America*, April 2, 1977, pp. 285–89, who points out: "The declaration correctly states that equality can coexist with

differentiation. But is there not a danger that differentiation may meld into discrimination when one group in the church (male ecclesiastics) tells the other group (women) exactly what their rights and roles are?" Cf. also the commentary edited by Arlene and Leonard Swidler, *Women Priests: A Catholic Commentary on the Vatican Declaration* (New York: Paulist Press, 1977). For the patriarchal stance of other Vatican documents, cf. the excellent review by Nadine Foley, "Woman in Vatican Documents, 1960 to the Present," in J. Coriden, *Sexism & Church Law: Equal Rights and Affirmative Action* (New York: Paulist Press, 1977), pp. 82–108.

2. Cf. J. G. Gager, *Kingdom and Community: The Social World of Early Christianity* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1975); G. Theissen, "Itinerant Radicalism: The Tradition of Jesus Sayings from the Perspective of the Sociology of Literature," *Radical Religion: The Bible and Liberation* (Community for Religious Research and Education, 1976), pp. 84–93; *idem*, *Soziologie der Jesus bewegung* (ThExH. 144; Munich: Kaiser, 1977); *idem*, "Soziale Schichtung in der korinthischen Gemeinde: Ein Beitrag zur Soziologie des hellenistischen Urchristentums," *Zeitschrift für Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, vol. LXV (1974), pp. 232–72; R. Scroggs, "The Earliest Christian Communities as Sectarian Movement," in J. Neusner (ed.), *Christianity, Judaism and Other Greco-Roman Cults*, vol. II (Leiden: Brill, 1975), pp. 1–23.

3. Cf. the "list of duties" for the office of bishop: he should be "one who governs his own house well and keeps his children in respectful obedience—for whoever does not know how to govern his own house, how can he take care of the church of God?" (1 Tim. 3:4–5). The patriarchal family is here the model for church structure.

4. H. v. Campenhausen, *Kirchliches Amt und geistliche Vollmacht in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1963); *idem*, "The Origins of the Idea of the Priesthood in the Early Church," in *Tradition and Life in the Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968), pp. 217–30; G. Dix, "The Ministry in the Early Church, c. A.D. 90–140," in K. Kirk (ed.), *The Apostolic Ministry* (London, 1964), pp. 183–303; J. L. Mohler, *The Origins and Evolution of the Priesthood* (New York, 1970); E. Schüssler Fiorenza, *Priester für Gott* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1972); A. E. Carr, "The Church in Process: Engendering the Future," in A. M. Gardiner (ed.), *Women and Catholic Priesthood: An Expanded Vision* (New York: Paulist Press, 1976), pp. 66–88, and the excellent research review by A. Lemaire, "The Ministries in the New Testament: Recent Research," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 3 (1973), pp. 133–66.

5. For a fuller development of this perspective, cf. my articles "Die Rolle der Frau in der urchristlichen Bewegung," *Concilium*, vol. VII (1976), pp. 3–9; "Interpreting Patriarchal Traditions," in L. Russell (ed.), *The Liberating Word: A Guide to Nonsexist Interpretation of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976), pp. 39–61; and "The Study of Women in Early Christianity. Some Methodological Considerations" (forthcoming).

6. Cf. R. Scroggs, "Paul and the Eschatological Woman: Revisited," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, vol. XLII (1974), p. 536; W. A. Meeks, "The Image of the Androgyne," *History of Religion*, vol. XIII (1974), pp. 165–208; H. D. Betz, "Spirit, Freedom and Law: Paul's Message to the Galatian Churches," *Svensk Exeg. Arsbok*, vol. XXXIX (1974), pp. 145–60; M. Bouttier, "Complexio Oppositorum: Sur les Formules de I Cor xii.13; Gal iii.26–8; Col iii.10, 11," *New Testament Studies*, vol. XXIII (1976), pp. 1–19.

7. R. Scroggs, "Paul and the Eschatological Woman," *loc. cit.*, has suggested that the opponents of Paul held that the baptismal formula eliminated the distinctions between the sexes, whereas Paul wants to eliminate the inequality between the sexes but not the distinctions (cf. 1 Cor. 7 and 11). However, Gal. 3:27f. does not eliminate sexual distinctions on the basis of creation, but eliminates specific gender roles within the community. Therefore it is not likely that the text is to be understood within the context of the Gnostic myth of the reunification of male and female, since "male and female" are here clearly parallel expressions to "Jew and Greek," "slave and free"; i.e., social relationships are meant. As the elimination of the societal religious distinctions between Jew and Greek becomes reality within the community of the baptized and is not just an eschatological hope, so is the elimination of specific gender roles a reality in the Christian community. Gal. 3:27f. therefore does not mean an eschatological utopian or an individualized and spiritualized Gnostic declaration but speaks about relationships within the Christian community.

8. For the connection of the *diakonein* motif with the Eucha-

ristic tablefellowship, cf. W. Brandt, *Dienst und Dienen im Neuen Testament* (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1931), p. 69; J. Roloff, "Die Deutung des Todes Jesu," *New Testament Studies*, vol. XIX (1972), pp. 38–64, 51–62.

9. F. V. Filson, "The Significance of the Early House Churches," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. LVIII (1939), pp. 105–12.

10. B. Gärtner, *The Temple and Community in Qumran and in the New Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1965); R. J. M. Kelvey, *The New Temple: The Church in the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1969); and my article "Cultic Language in Qumran and in the New Testament," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, vol. XXXVIII (1976), pp. 159–77.

11. Cf., however, the derogatory remark of W. A. Meeks (ed.), *The Writings of St. Paul* (New York: Norton, 1972), p. 23: "It is a response to reports which have come to Paul by . . . *gossip* from 'Chloe's people' (1:11), otherwise unknown" (emphasis mine).

12. Cf. J. E. Crouch, *The Origin and Intention of the Colossian Haustafel* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972); D. Balch, "*Let wives be submissive . . .": The Origin, Form and Apologetic Function of the Household Duty Code in 1 Peter* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Microfilm, 1974).

13. G. Theissen, "Itinerant Radicalism . . . ," *loc. cit.*, p. 91, has suggested that the urban Hellenistic congregations "represented a family-style love-patriarchalism, in which the social distinctions survived in a softened, milder form. Characteristic of this ethos were the early Christian instructions to household members . . ." Cf. also his "Soziale Schichtung in der korinthischen Gemeinde," *Zeitschrift für Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* vol. LXV (1974), pp. 232–72. However, Gal. 3:28 and the leadership of women in early Christian house churches speaks against such a "love-patriarchalism" in the earliest missionary communities.

14. Cf. E. E. Ellis, "Paul and His Co-Workers," *New Testament Studies*, vol. XVII (1970–71), pp. 437–52, especially 439.

15. Cf. W. E. Thomas, "The Place of Women in the Church at Philippi, *Expository Times*, vol. LXXXIII (1972), pp. 117–20; cf. also R. W. Graham, "Women in the Pauline Churches: A Review Article," *Lexington Theological Quarterly*, vol. XI (1976), pp. 25–33, especially 29f.

16. Cf. A. Harnack, "Probabilia über die Addresse und den Verfasser des Hebräerbriefes," *Zeitschrift für Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, vol. I (1900), pp. 16–41, especially 33ff.

17. The writer of *Codex Bezae* (D) (parchment manuscript of the fifth/sixth centuries which probably represents a second-century text) places the name of Priscilla (Prisca) in second place in Acts 18:26. He not only makes Aquila the subject of the sentence in 18:2 by writing "Aquila with his wife Priscilla," but also plays down the leadership of Priscilla insofar as he mentions Aquila three times in Acts 18 (3, 7, 22) without referring to Priscilla. On the whole, Codex D has a tendency to minimize the references to women in Acts. In Acts 1:14 he adds "children" and thus makes the women disciples into wives of the apostles. In Acts 17:34 he omits "and a woman by the name of Damatis," and in 17:12 he writes "men and women" instead of "women and men." Cf. E. J. Epp, *The Theological Tendency of Codex Bezae Cantabrigensis in Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1966), pp. 74f.

18. Cf. M. J. Lagrange, *Saint Paul: Épitre aux Romains* (Paris, 1916), p. 366. Some manuscripts read "Julia."

19. See my forthcoming articles "The Twelve" and "The Apostleship of Women in Early Christianity," in Arlene and Leonard Swidler (eds.), *Women Priests*, pp. 114–22 and 135–40. Cf. B. Bauer, "Uxores Circumducere (1 Kor 9:5)," *Biblische Zeitschrift*, vol. III (1959), pp. 94–102. Cf. also the interpretation of Clement of Alexandria, who likens their missionary ministry to that of the deaconess and limits it to women: ". . . and took their wives with them, not as women with whom they had marriage relations, but as sisters, that they might be their fellow ministers [*syndiakonous*] in dealing with housewives. It was through them that the Lord's teaching penetrated also the women's quarters without any scandal being aroused" (Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis*, III, 6:53,3f.). Clement understands "sister" here in an encratite sense, even though the text does not give any indication of encratite tendencies, since "brother" never has encratite overtones.

20. H. Lietzmann, *The History of the Early Church*, vol. I (London: Lutterworth Press, 1963), p. 146. For a similar patriarchal interpretation, cf. E. A. Judge, "St. Paul and Classical Society," *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*, vol. XV (1972), p. 28: "The status of women who patronized St. Paul would particularly repay attention. They are clearly persons of some independence and

eminence in their own circles, *used to entertaining and running their salons*, if that is what Paul's meetings were, as they saw best" (emphasis mine).

21. K. H. Schelkle, "Ministry and Ministers in the New Testament Church," *Concilium*, vol. XI (1969), pp. 5–11; A. Lemaire, "From Services to Ministries: Diakonia in the First Two Centuries," *Concilium*, vol. XIV (1972), pp. 35–49; J. Gnilka, *Der Philipperbrief* (Freiburg: Herder, 1968), pp. 35f.

22. The verb as well as the substantive "have the twofold sense of leadership and care." In the First Epistle of Clement of Rome, 36:1; 61:3 the substantive is used with reference to Christ, the High Priest. (B. Reicke, "*prohistemi*," *TDNT*, vol. VI, p. 703.)

23. Cf. "Patronage and Patronus," in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), pp. 790f.

24. The judgment depends on the decision whether or not 1 Cor. 11:2–16 is genuine Pauline. Cf. W. Munro, "Patriarchy and Charismatic Community in 'Paul,' " in Plaskow and Romero, *Women and Religion*, 2nd ed. (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1974), pp. 189–98; W. O. Walker, "1 Cor. 11:2–16 and Paul's View of Women," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. XCIV (1975), pp. 94–110, and the rejection of his attempt to declare 1 Cor. 11:2–16 as non-Pauline by J. Murphy-O'Connor, "The Non-Pauline Character of 1 Corinthians 11:2–16?," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. XCV (1976), pp. 615–21.

25. Almost all contributions that discuss the role of women in the New Testament grapple with this text. Cf. S. Lösch, "Christliche Frauen in Korinth," *Theologische Quartalschrift*, vol. CXXVII (1974), pp. 216–61; G. H. Gilbert, "Women in the Churches of Paul," *Biblical World*, vol. II (1893), pp. 38–47; E. Kähler, *Die Frau in den Paulinischen Briefen* (Zurich: Gotthelf, 1960); M. D. Hooker, "Authority on Her Head: An Examination of 1 Cor. 11:10," *New Testament Studies*, vol. X (1963–64), pp. 410–16; G. B. Caird, "Paul and Women's Liberty," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, vol. LIV (1972), pp. 268–81; W. J. Martin, "I Corinthians 11:2–16: An Interpretation," in Gasque and Martin (eds.), *Apostolic History and the Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), pp. 231–41; R. Scroggs, "Paul and the Eschatological Woman," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, vol. XL (1972), pp. 283–303; J. B. Hurley, "Did Paul Require Veils or the Silence of Women? A Consideration of 1 Cor. 11:2–16 and 1 Cor. 14:33b–36," *Westminster Theological Journal*, vol. XXXV (1972–73), pp. 190–220; A. Feuillet, "La Dignité et le rôle de la femme d'après quelques textes Pauliniens," *New Testament Studies*, vol. XXI (1975), pp. 157–91 (for an English abstract of this article, cf. "Is Paul anti-feminist?," *Theology Digest*, vol. XXIV [1975], pp. 29–35); A. Joubert, "Le Voile des femmes," *New Testament Studies*, vol. XVIII (1972), pp. 422–24; J. Galot, *Mission et ministère de la femme* (Paris: 1973), pp. 123ff.; V. Ramsay Mollenkott, *Women, Men and the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1977).

26. Cf. G. Fitzer, *Das Weib schweige in der Gemeinde: Über den unpaulinischen Charakter der mulier taceat Verse in 1 Kor. 14* (Munich: Kaiser, 1963). Cf. also H. Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), pp. 246f.; S. Aalen, "A Rabbinic Formula in 1 Cor. 14:34," in F. L. Cross (ed.), *Studia Theologica, II, 1* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1964), pp. 513–25; G. Dautzenberg, *Urchristliche Prophetie* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1975), pp. 257–73.

27. For the literature on the topic, cf. E. Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), pp. 154–63, and the notes above.

28. Cf. Dibelius and Conzelmann, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972), pp. 44–49 (literature); R. Falconer, "1 Timothy 2:14–15: Interpretative Notes," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. LX (1949), pp. 375–79.

29. Cf. Dibelius and Conzelmann, pp. 65ff. and 116, on the "false Teachers" of the Pastoral Epistles; R. J. Karris, "The Background and Significance of the Polemic of the Pastoral Epistles," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. XCII (1973), pp. 549–64.

30. C. Schlau, *Die Akten des Paulus und der Thekla* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1877); Hennecke and Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, vol. II (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1965), pp. 322–90, especially 353–64; E. Hazelton Haight, *More Essays on Greek Romances* (New York: Longdon, 1945), pp. 48–65.

31. Cf. Hennecke and Schneemelcher, pp. 331ff.

32. Tertullian, *De Baptismo*, 17: "But if certain Acts of Paul, which are falsely so named, claim the example of Thecla for allowing women to teach and to baptize, let men know that in Asia the presbyter who compiled that document, thinking to add of his own to Paul's reputation, was found out and though he professed he had done it for love of Paul was deposed from his position. How

could we believe that Paul should give a female power to teach and to baptize when he did not allow a woman even to learn in her own right? 'Let them keep silence,' he says, 'and ask their husbands at home.' "

33. Cf. M. Braun, *History and Romance in Greco-Roman Literature* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1938); P. J. Achtemeier, "Jesus and the Disciples as Miracle Workers in the Apocryphal New Testament," in E. Schüssler Fiorenza (ed.), *Aspects of Religious Propaganda in Judaism and Early Christianity* (Notre Dame University Press, 1976), pp. 149–86, especially 162ff.

34. R. Söder, *Die apokryphen Apostelgeschichten und die romanhafte Literatur der Antike* (1932; repr. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1969), pp. 119–47; Sr. M. R. Nugent, *Portrait of the Consecrated Woman in Greek Christian Literature of the First Four Centuries* (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1941), pp. 77–78, 81ff.

35. Cf. E. Cothenet, "Prophétisme et ministère d'après le Nouveau Testament," *La Maison Dieu*, vol. CVII (1971), pp. 29–50; cf. also the literature and research review in G. Dautzenberg, *Urchristliche Prophetie*, pp. 15–42.

36. For Luke's redaction of the Joel material in Acts 2:17–21, cf. R. F. Zehnle, *Peter's Pentecost Discourse* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1971), pp. 28–34, 125ff.

37. This motif was further developed in the patristic period. Cf. A. Grillmeier, "Maria Prophetin," *Revue des Études Augustiniennes*, vol. XI (1956), pp. 295–312.

38. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, III, 31.

39. *Ibid.*, 39.

40. Cf. L. Zscharnack, *Der Dienst der Frau in den ersten Jahrhunderten der christlichen Kirche* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1902), pp. 179–90.

41. Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.*, V, 17.

42. Justin, *Dialogus*, c, Tryph. 88.

43. Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, III, 11.

44. Hennecke and Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, vol. II, pp. 379f.

45. *Didache*, 10:7; 13:3; 15:1f.

46. M. E. Boring, "The Apocalypse as Christian Prophecy: A Discussion of the Issues Raised by the Book of Revelation for the Study of Early Christian Prophecy," *SBL Seminar Papers*, vol. II (Cambridge: Society of Biblical Literature, 1974), pp. 43–62.

47. It is generally assumed that the followers of "Jezebel" are identical with the Nicolaitans (Apoc. 2:2–7) and with "those who hold the teaching of Balaam" (2:14). Yet it is not clear what their relationship to the later Gnostic group of the Nicolaitans was. Cf. my article "Apocalyptic and Gnosis in the Book of Revelation and Paul," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. 92 (1973), pp. 565–81.

48. Cf. my article "The Quest for the Johannine School: The Apocalypse and the Fourth Gospel," *New Testament Studies*, vol. XXIV (1977), pp. 402–27, for the literature on the "school" question.

49. Most exegetes understand the address "elect lady" as a circumlocution for "church." However, the similarity in wording in Apoc. 2:20 and 2 John 1 suggests that the "elect lady" is the head of the community as "Jezebel" is the prophet-leader in the Apocalypse.

50. Cf. the excellent article by K. Thraede, "Frau," in *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, vol. VIII (Stuttgart, 1973), pp. 197–269, especially 254–66.

51. Epiphanius, *Haereses*, LI, 3.

52. Cf. H. Kraft, "Die altchristliche Prophetie und die Entstehung des Montanismus," *Theologische Zeitschrift*, vol. XI (1955), pp. 249–71; P. de Labriolle, *La Crise montaniste: Les Sources de l'histoire du montanisme* (Paris, 1913); *idem*, " 'Mulieres in Ecclesia taceant': Un Aspect de la lutte anti-montaniste," *Bulletin d'ancienne littérature et d'archéologie chrétiennes*, vol. I (1911), pp. 1–24, 103–22.

53. Epiphanius, *Haer.*; XLVIII, 1:3; XLVIII, 14:1.

54. Cf. H. Lietzmann, *History of the Early Church*, vol. I, pp. 200f.

55. Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.*, 16, 17. Cf. J. Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*, vol. I (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1971), pp. 105ff. But compare the severe judgment of Montanism by R. A. Knox, *Enthusiasm: A Chapter in the History of Religions* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950), p. 49: "The history of Montanism is not to be read as that of a great spiritual revival, maligned by its enemies.

It is that of a naked fanaticism, which tried to stampede the Church into greater severity . . ."

56. Cf. L. Zscharnack, *Der Dienst der Frau*, pp. 184ff.
57. Didymus the Blind, *On the Trinity*, III, 41:3.
58. Cyprian, *Epistolae* 75:10.
59. Epiphanius, *Haer.*, XLIX, 2.
60. Origen, *Fragment on 1 Cor. 74*.
61. Didymus, *On the Trinity*, III, 41:3.
62. *Apostolic Constitutions*, III, 6:1–23.
63. *Ibid.*, II, 58:4–6.
64. For an excellent review of church development in the question of women's ministry, cf. R. Gryson, *The Ministry of Women in the Early Church* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1976).
65. In the following section the English quotations of the texts are from W. Förster, *Gnosis: A Selection of Gnostic Texts*, vol. I, Engl. transl. ed. by R. McL. Wilson (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972).
66. K. Thraede ("Frau," *loc. cit.*, p. 237) maintains that Gnostic movements were known for the great participation of women in them. He suggests that the Gnostic dualism of "male and female" developed in reaction to the actual leadership of women in Gnosticism.
67. The standard work on Marcion is still A. v. Harnack, *Marcion: Das Evangelium vom fremden Gott* (1924; repr. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1960).
68. Epiphanius, *Panarion*, XLV, 2:1.
69. Cf. H. Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion: The Message of the Alien God and the Beginnings of Christianity*, 2nd enl. ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963), pp. 236f.; R. A. Baer, *Philo's Use of the Categories Male and Female* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), pp. 65–80.
70. Hennecke and Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, vol. I, pp. 166f.
71. Pseudo-Clementines, *Homilies*, II, 15:3.
72. Cf. G. Strecker, *Das Judenchristentum in den Pseudoklementinen* (Göttingen, 1958), pp. 35–96; J. Jervell, *Imago Dei: Gn 1, 26f. im Spätjudentum, in der Gnosis und in den Paulinischen Briefen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960), pp. 163f.
73. *Acts of Thomas*, 27.
74. Cf. L. Zscharnack, *Der Dienst der Frau*, pp. 156–79, especially 174f.
75. *Gospel of Thomas*, Log. 114. Cf. B. Gärtner, *The Theology of the Gospel of Thomas* (London: Collins, 1961), p.253: "In the Gnostic systems the man–woman relationship is motivated basically by the structure of the heavenly world, the male and female powers which are striving after unity."

76. Tertullian, *De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 6:6; 30:6; Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.*, IV, 13:2.
77. Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem*, III, 11.
78. Tertullian, *De Praescr. Haer.*, 30:6.
79. Cf. W. Förster, *Gnosis*, pp. 34–37; H. Kraft, "Gab es einen Gnostiker Karpokrates?," *Theologische Zeitschrift*, vol. VIII (1952), pp. 434–43.
80. Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.*, I, 25:1–6.
81. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis*, II, 2, no.6.
82. *Ibid.*, no.6:1.
83. *Ibid.*, no.8:1.
84. *Ibid.*, no.10:1.
85. These accusations were made by pagans and Jews against the Christians in general, by mainstream Christianity against Montanist and Gnostic groups and vice versa, but also by various Gnostic groups against each other. Cf. R. Haardt, *Gnosis: Character and Testimony* (Leiden: Brill, 1971), p. 69 fn.1.
86. Simonianism also belongs to this type. For the Helene/Ennoia figure, cf. the analyses of K. Beyschlag, *Simon Magus und die christliche Gnosis* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1974), pp. 134–64; G. Lüdemann, *Untersuchungen zur simonianischen Gnosis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975), pp. 55–81.
87. H. Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion*, p. 237.
88. R. A. Baer, *Philo's Use of . . . Male and Female*, p. 71.
89. Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.*, I, 23:3.
90. For the affinity of the Jungian system to the male-female principles of this second type of Gnostic dualism, cf. R. M. Stein, "Liberating the Feminine," in R. Tiffany Barnhouse and U. T. Holmes (eds.), *Male and Female* (New York: Seabury Press, 1976), pp. 76–86, and A. Belford Ulanov, "Jung on Male and Female," *ibid.*, pp. 197–210. Cf. also the feminist theological evaluation of this dualism by R. Radford Ruether, *New Woman, New Earth: Sexist Ideologies and Human Liberation* (New York: Seabury, 1975), pp. 151–59.
91. Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.*, I, 14:1.
92. Gn. 1:27; Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.*, I, 18:2.

93. Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.*, I, 23:3.

94. R. M. Grant, "The Mystery of Marriage in the Gospel of Philip," *Vigiliae Christianae*, vol. XV (1961), pp. 129–40.

95. Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.*, I, 21:3.

96. R. McL. Wilson, *The Gospel of Philip* (London: Mowbray, 1962); cf. also W. A. Meeks, "The Image of the Androgyne," *loc. cit.*, pp. 191–95.

97. Wilson, *Gospel of Philip*, 71.

98. *Ibid.*, 78.

99. Even L. Zscharnack, *Der Dienst der Frau*, pp. 171ff., repeats the judgment of Irenaeus that Marcus was a "sorcerer."

100. Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.*, I, 13:2.

101. *Ibid.*, 14:1.

102. *Ibid.*, 13:3.

103. *Ibid.*, 13:4.

104. Wilson, *Gospel of Philip*, 31.

105. *Ibid.*, 32, 35.

106. This is in my opinion overlooked by E. H. Pagels, "What Became of God the Mother? Conflicting Images of God in Early Christianity," *Signs*, vol. II (1976), pp. 293–303.

107. For the definition of woman as "other," cf. the classic work of S. de Beauvior, *The Second Sex* (New York: Knopf, 1953).

108. Tertullian, *De Praescr. Haer.*, XLI.

109. Tertullian, *De Virginibus Velandis*, IX. Cf. Ch. Stücklin, *Tertullian, De virginibus velandis* (Bern: H. Lang, 1974), pp. 189–203.

110. Cf. J. Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition*, vol. I, p. 109.

111. For the history of the formation of the canon, cf. the *Introductions to the New Testament*.

112. Cf. P. Perkins, "Peter in Gnostic Revelation," in *Proceedings of SBL: 1974 Seminar Papers*, vol. II (Washington: SBL, 1974), pp. 1–13, especially 1f.

113. Cf. M. Hengel, "Maria Magdalena und die Frauen als Zeugen," in Betz, Hengel and Schmid (eds.), *Abraham unser Vater* (Leiden: Brill, 1963), pp. 243–56, and my article "Mary Magdalene: Apostle to the Apostles," *UTS Journal*, April 1975, pp. 22ff.; U. Holzmeister, "Die Magdalenenfrage in der kirchlichen Überlieferung," *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie*, vol. XLVI (1922), pp. 402–22, 556–84.

114. C. F. Parvey, "The Theology and Leadership of Women in the New Testament," in R. R. Ruether (ed.), *Religion and Sexism* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974), pp. 117–49, attempts a short description of the passages on women in Luke and Acts but does not give a critical evaluation of Luke's theological tendencies.

115. Hennecke and Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, vol. I, pp. 195ff.

116. *Ibid.*, pp. 243–48.

117. *Papyrus Berolinensis*, 124:9f.

118. *Coptic Gnostic Library*, Codex I, 106:16–23. Cf. Hennecke and Schneemelcher, vol. I, p. 251.

119. *Papyrus Ber.*, 127:16.

120. Hennecke and Schneemelcher, vol. I, pp. 248ff.

121. *Ibid.*, p. 339; Epiphanius, *Panarion*, XXVI, 8:2–3.

122. *Gospel of Thomas*, Log. 114.

123. C. Schmidt, *Koptisch-Gnostische Schriften*, vol. I, *bearb.* W. Till (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1954); Hennecke and Schneemelcher, vol. I, pp. 250–59.

124. For the special role of Mary Magdalene and "John"(?) in the Fourth Gospel, cf. R. E. Brown, "Roles of Women in the Fourth Gospel," *Theological Studies*, vol. XXXVI (1975), pp. 688–99, and the popular account of S. M. Schneiders, "Apostleship of Women in John's Gospel," *Catholic Charismatic*, vol. I (1977), pp. 16–20. In the Fourth Gospel we also find a certain tension between Mary Magdalene and Peter or the Beloved Disciple and Peter.

125. For the theological understanding of "becoming a virgin" in Philo and in Gnosticism, cf. R. A. Baer, *Philo's Use of . . . Male and Female*, p. 75.

126. Chap. 96; cf. Schmidt and Till, *Koptisch-Gnostische Schriften*, vol. I, pp. 148.25ff.

127. Chap. 36; also chap. 72; see Schmidt and Till, 36.3–25 and 104.17–39.

128. Published in W. C. Till, *Die gnostischen Schriften des koptischen Papyrus Berolinensis* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1955), pp. 68–72; Hennecke and Schneemelcher, vol. I, pp. 340–44.

129. *Papyrus Ber.*, 18:1–21.

130. *Didascalia*, III, 6:2. Cf. R. H. Connolly, *Didascalia Apostolorum: The Syriac Version* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1929), p. 133. Also III, 6:1–2. Cf. F. X. Funk, *Didascalia et constitutiones*

Apostolorum (1905; repr. Turin, 1964), pp. 191, 8–18; transl. *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Buffalo: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885–96), vol. VII, p. 427.

131. *The Ecclesiastical Canons of the Apostles*, 24:1–28; English transl., J. P. Arendzen, "An Entire Syriac Text of the Apostolic Church Order," *Journal of Theological Studies*, vol. III (1902), p. 71.

132. Hennecke and Schneemelcher, vol. I, pp. 492f.

133. Cf. A. v. Harnack, *Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries*, vol. II (New York: Putnam, 1908), p. 64. He argues, however, that the opposition to Gnosticism and Montanism led in the church to the exclusion of women. In a similar fashion argues F. Heiler, *Die Frau in den Religionen der Menschheit* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1977), pp. 115f. Cf. also my article "Feminist Theology as a Critical Theology of Liberation," *Theological Studies*, vol. XXXVI (1975), pp. 605–26.

134. *Commentary on Romans*, 10:17 (PG 14, 1278A-C).

135. E. A. Clark, "Sexual Politics in the Writings of John Chrysostom," *Anglican Theological Review*, vol. LIX (1977), pp. 3–20, especially 15f.; D. F. Winslow, "Priesthood and Sexuality in the Post-Nicene Fathers," *The Saint Luke's Journal of Theology*, vol. XVIII (1975), pp. 214–27, argues that the Fathers took the incarnation seriously insofar as they were concerned with the whole person of Christ. However, they did not perceive that "sexuality was an integral part of the whole person. It follows that to deny the full participation in the life of the church to some persons (women) is to deny the reality of their full baptism into the one fully human articulation of God in Jesus Christ, as well as to deny the full 'assumption' of humanity of the incarnate Word" (p. 226).

TWO

Mothers of the Church: Ascetic Women in the Late Patristic Age

ROSEMARY RUETHER

GOD AND WOMAN THE HIDDEN HISTORY

by Elizabeth Rodgers Dobell

From the earliest times, the religious experience of the human race has undergone constant change and modification. Some changes, especially in the Judaeo-Christian tradition, have been well documented: for instance, the Protestant Reformation and the Catholic Counter Reformation. But other changes have not been so extensively recorded. The article that follows discusses what scholars are beginning to recognize as one such change that seems to have taken place early in history. It contains information that only recently has surfaced in the academic world of archaeologists and Biblical scholars and may be surprising to most readers, but the subject matter is fascinating and of importance to women.

Since some of the ideas and evidence being turned up by researchers may seem to set on end conventional thought about religion, you may want to discuss them with your priest, your minister or your rabbi. He or she probably will be familiar with the new ideas, and you may be surprised—as we were when we telephoned clergymen and clergywomen—at how widely they are accepted by the religious community.

—The Editors

The quiet sanctuary of St. John's Episcopal Church in Crawfordsville, Indiana, is relatively small, and it normally accommodates comfortably about 125 people; but on Saturday, January 8, 1977, almost 500 people crowded into St. John's to witness a special ceremony. Some of those present had traveled great distances, from as far away as Florida and California, and not surprisingly, they were slightly unprepared for both the exceptionally cold weather in Crawfordsville that day and for the unexpected crush in the church. They were totally unprepared, along with everyone else, for the presence of the armed sheriff's deputies.

There were two deputies. Both were dressed in plain clothes and were reasonably unobtrusive, but it was obvious that they were watching the congregation carefully. That was the unnerving thing.

"To speak of God in exclusively male terms distorts and limits our perception of God." — Church of the Brethren task force on the problem of nonsexist language in worship and literature

Why should the ordination of a priest—and the children and adults crowded into St. John's had gathered for no purpose other than to witness the ordination of a priest—require the presence of armed men? For no reason, evidently, other than the fact that the priest to be ordained was a woman.

Natalia Vonnegut, the mother of four and the founder of the increasingly well-known Julian Mission, in Indianapolis, Indiana, was to become that afternoon only the second woman Episcopal priest in Indiana, and the fourth regularly ordained woman Episcopal priest in the United States. But for over a month she had been receiving threatening telephone calls. The last had come just the night before, on January 7th, when still another unidentified male voice had repeated a familiar message to Mrs. Vonnegut: "If you care anything about the welfare of your children, you won't go through with the ordination ceremony."

The idea of a female priest is still that disturbing, in the 1970s, to certain people living in America. Disturbing enough that they are willing to carry on the old and destructive tradition of threatening those whose vision of the Godhead and whose religious practices are different—as the early Moslems set about converting whole nations by the sword, with the

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Christian Crusaders soldiering in their wake; as agents of the Inquisition tortured and burned innumerable bodies in the name of the merciful Christ to "save" immortal souls; as Protestants and Catholics killed each other all across Europe, and together murdered Jews. Earlier, according to the Old Testament, the Hebrews themselves killed great numbers of Canaanites—men, women and children—because the Canaanites worshiped "false gods." And even today, groups such as the Ku Klux Klan continue to threaten Catholics and Jews (along with Blacks) from behind giant crosses.

"God is Spirit, neither masculine nor feminine in human terms. We have anthropomorphized God into male and that is the ultimate put-down to women."—Dr. Kenneth Teegarden, General Minister and President of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

But regardless of how violently human beings have disagreed for the last 3,000 years over the one true way to worship God the Father, they seldom disagreed that the female half of the race could not—indeed, *must* not—serve the Father as priests, ministers or rabbis. It was God's will, men agreed instead, that women should be subordinate to their husbands and fathers in all ways, and in no way more so than in the mosque, the church or the synagogue.

It seems almost unbelievable that there was an earlier age, and one that lasted from at least 30,000 B.C. until about 2000 B.C., and in some few places until as late as almost A.D. 500, when men were subordinate to their wives and mothers. Not in all aspects of life, even then, but most certainly in the confines of the great temples of worship that existed in the cities of the ancient world when the Supreme Being—astounding as it may seem at present—was worshiped as a woman.

The Great Mother was worshiped, furthermore, in her own right—not as the wife or daughter of some superior male god or the muse of poets, as in the familiar myths of the Greeks and Romans. In those myths the ancient Ancestress already had been "married off" to male newcomers like Zeus or Jupiter, or made subservient to them; but then, those myths sprang into being at what was already a relatively late stage in the development of the race.

No—before that age that we now call the Age of the Patriarchs in the Bible and stretching back into the dim recesses of time, the Great Mother ruled supreme and the priests who led all people to Her were female. The archaeological evidence continues to accumulate and modern scholars continue to disentangle the many confused threads of the ancient tapestry, so long hidden from view.

Consequently the reality of God as Mother, in addition to the reality of God as Father, is beginning to sink deep into the consciousness of a growing number of women and men. Religion may never again be the same as we know it today.

The Reverend Natalia Vonnegut was ordained without incident on January 8, 1977. The threats against her children never materialized. When the officiating priest recited the statement that precedes all Episcopal ordinations—"if any know any impediment or crime because of which we should not proceed, come forward now and make it known"—there was one orderly but totally expected protest. The statement of the single male who stood up to speak on behalf of an Episcopalian organization opposed to female priests was brief: The proceedings, he said, were "sacrilege"; it was "heresy" to ordain women and it could result only in schism from the "true body of Christ." As the man left the church the ordination of Mrs. Vonnegut continued.

Sacrilege? There is no word spoken by Jesus Christ in the New Testament against women. Even the Vatican's own Biblical Commission concluded, in 1976, that there is nothing in the Bible forbidding women priests. The Pope's decision in January, 1977, that the Catholic Church "does not consider herself authorized to admit women to priestly ordination" relied almost completely on tradition, on the Church's "unbroken tradition" of male priests.

Priests, declared the Pope, must have a "natural resemblance" to Christ. If a woman celebrated Mass, "it would be difficult to see in the minister the image of Christ." The leaders of Eastern Orthodox churches agree. Orthodox Jews, of course, also have a difficult time imagining any "natural resemblance" between a female rabbi and the Lord God of Hosts.

But then, men and women in the ancient world had a difficult time imagining any "natural resemblance" between the Great Mother they revered and worshiped as the creator of all life and civilization and the male of the species.

For many years, archaeologists and scholars dismissed much of the evidence of the Female Deity. Conditioned by 3,000 years of male dominance in history, it simply never occurred to men—or to women, for that matter—that there might have been a time when males in all matters, religious and secular, were not masters but at best only equals. Scholars dismissed the great number of female figures found in the Mediterranean world, in Europe and the Americas, and the single most persistent kind of object found at early archaeological sites, as mere symbols of "fertility cults" created by "primitive" imaginations—just as archaeologists in some far-distant future might dismiss the cross as the symbol of primitive "death cults" if they had no understanding of Christianity.

The fact that the Female Deity had many names in different places and at different times in the ancient world also was misinterpreted as proof that goddess worship was only "cult" worship—some localized and much less authentic manifestation of the religious impulse than that found in the "higher religions" of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism. Only recently have we begun to understand that whether the Goddess was called, among other things, Isis in Egypt, Inanna Ishtar in ancient Sumeria, Tiamat in Babylon, Astarte in Syria, Demeter in Greece, the Magna Mater in Phrygia and Rome, Annapurna in India, Coatlicue in South America—or Asherah, Ashtoreth or the "queen of heaven" in the Old Testament itself—the same religious impulse was being celebrated. The Great Mother, in all her manifestations, was One—as the God of Orthodox, Conservative and Reform Jews and of Catholics, Presbyterians, Methodists and Baptists is One.

"I am now persuaded that it is illegitimate to use masculine—or feminine—language about God. What we ought to use is neutral language. This question is not a 'tempest in a teapot.' Language is crucial in the structuring of our consciousness."—Rabbi Chaim Stern, editor of three new prayer books published by the Central Conference of American Rabbis (Reform)

To our earliest ancestors the female principle simply was the source of all life. Only a woman could bring forth children, and the creative mystery of woman, the flow of a mother's milk, her menstrual cycle—rhythmically in accord with the waxing and waning of the moon, the birth, increase, decline and "death" of that celestial orb—was linked to the mystery of all creation.

What power but female power, then, in the mind of early humankind, could continually re-create life and death in the world, dark and light, spirit and flesh? In their desire to be linked to that all-encompassing power the ancients began developing, at least as early as 30,000 B.C., a mythology of the naked goddess. For whereas men in all their rites dressed themselves in special costumes for worship, from magical feathers to prayer shawls to priestly cassocks, the most potent force of woman was made manifest in her completely unadorned body.

To modern eyes, some of the earliest female figurines seem fierce and terrifying, even lewd, in their bold nakedness and the emphasis on breasts and genitalia. Others are more realistic and beautiful, although even these often seemed shocking to the Victorian scholars who first began unraveling, in the 1800s, the secrets of the preclassical ancients.

Temple caves of the Female Deity dating from 30,000 B.C. have been found in the Soviet Ukraine, northern Spain and southern France, to date. These were the forerunners of all temples and cathedrals, because they clearly were intended as sacred places where the mystery and space of the Deity could be made manifest to the human mind. Over thousands of years thereafter, in many places, the

of Antiquus [illegible]. Johann Jakob Bachofen [illegible] we began to understand that worship [illegible] and [illegible] Mary [illegible] Greek [illegible] Roman Syrian [illegible] Mother Goddess [illegible] Ancient [illegible] the Venus [illegible]

"I am more persuaded than ever that it is illegitimate to use masculine—or feminine—language about God, what we ought to use is neutral language. This question is not a technical issue merely. Language is crucial to the structuring of our consciousness."—Ruth Cheney Streeter, editor of three new prayer books published by the Central Conference of American Rabbis (Reform)

is the archetype. The great Mother is all [illegible] the [illegible] of [illegible] and the [illegible] Mother of [illegible].

To say [illegible] the [illegible] of God was the worship of all the Church [illegible] mother [illegible] women, the [illegible] of [illegible] of God [illegible] of the [illegible] "Earth" [illegible] worship [illegible].

What does it matter, [illegible] of the [illegible] the earth [illegible] and [illegible] that [illegible] earth as [illegible] them [illegible] women were [illegible].

In modern [illegible] some of the earliest female [illegible] and [illegible] the [illegible] and the [illegible]. Others [illegible] that [illegible] the Vatican [illegible] the [illegible] of the [illegible].

[illegible] From 25,000 B.C. have been found in [illegible] and [illegible] These were the [illegible] of all [illegible] that [illegible] and [illegible] of the [illegible] many [illegible].

as Father is [illegible] the [illegible] of a [illegible] of women [illegible] the name it exists.

The Reverend Marjorie [illegible] 1977. The [illegible] her children [illegible] the "If any [illegible] of which we should [illegible] and now [illegible] was [illegible] The [illegible] Christian [illegible] to [illegible] "Instead [illegible] of Christ [illegible] the church the [illegible] accepted.

Suppose [illegible] in January, 1977, that the Catholic Church "does not [illegible] women to [illegible] traditions [illegible] of the Church's [illegible] tradition of [illegible].

[illegible] declared the [illegible] have a "natural resemblance" to Christ [illegible] "It would be difficult to see in the [illegible] of Christ." [illegible] "natural resemblance" [illegible] a female [illegible] the Lord God of them.

And [illegible] a "natural resemblance" between the [illegible] and [illegible] of the [illegible].

[illegible] the [illegible] of the [illegible] to [illegible] women [illegible] the Mother [illegible] the King of Kings [illegible] of the [illegible] "natural resemblance" [illegible].

The fact that the [illegible] in the [illegible] the [illegible] have that [illegible] "mother-goddess."

Christian Education's advertising in their wake, as apogee of the Inquisition tortured and burned innumerable heretics in the name of the merciful Christ [illegible] innumerable souls, as Protestants and Catholics slew each other all across Europe, and together murdered Jews. Further, according to the Old Testament, the Hebrews themselves killed great numbers of Canaanite men, women and children because the Canaanites worshiped other gods. And some Jewish groups, such as the Ku Klux Klan, continue to threaten Catholics and Jews with [illegible].

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The [illegible] of [illegible] for the last 3,000 years over the one God who is worshiped [illegible] the Father [illegible] that the female half of the race could not [illegible] the Father [illegible] God's will [illegible] that women should be [illegible] to [illegible] all [illegible] and to [illegible] the [illegible].

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The Great Mother was worshiped [illegible] in her own right [illegible] with [illegible] and [illegible] of the Greeks [illegible] already [illegible] but the [illegible] of the ancient [illegible] in [illegible] of the [illegible].

Mr. [illegible] that we are now call the Age of the Patriarchs is [illegible] and [illegible] the Great Mother [illegible] and the [illegible] of the [illegible]. The archaeological evidence continues to accumulate and modern scholars continue to disentangle the many confused threads of the ancient [illegible] so long hidden from view.

Consequently, the reality of God as Mother, in addition to the reality of God

"Whenever a symbol has attached itself to a reality in the minds of people through many centuries, it is unwise and inappropriate to separate the two. For that reason, I resist the idea of changing the male reference to the Deity. But just as strenuously, I do not believe that the Reality we call God, whether Being, Process or Person, is to be conceived of as exclusively masculine. There are rich resources of feminine imagery in the Bible, images that we should isolate and elevate in our minds and hearts.

"So God as masculine, si! So God as feminine, si!" — Rev. Martin E. Marty, University of Chicago Divinity School

religion of the Goddess grew rich with symbols, signs, rites and rituals that focused the minds of men and women on Her boundless mystery. In much the same way the cross or the taking of communion focuses the minds of Christians on the mystery they celebrate in the birth, death and resurrection of Christ.

The Goddess was the creator, the lawgiver, the judge, the wise counselor, the bounty of Mother Earth, the dark womb to which mankind returned, the Queen of Heaven, All. And within Her embrace all apparent opposites, even life and death, were to be seen only as part of a single, unified process of creation, rest and re-creation. Both the productive aspect of nature and its negative killing aspect were only parts of a single thread spun on the loom of Time.

It is fascinating to learn that one of the many symbols associated with the Female Deity was the serpent, often depicted in the ancient world coiled around the mystical Tree of Life in the World Garden. In the Bible the serpent is the embodiment of evil because it enticed Eve to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, whereupon humankind became "aware" of its nakedness and evoked the wrath of God for disobedience. So that "the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever: Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden. . . ." (Genesis 3:22-23)

At least 7,000 years beore the Hebrew scriptures were compiled, the strange ability of the serpent to renew itself by shedding its skin was seen as symbolic of the higher mystery of both physical and spiritual rebirth—of the way in which all humankind comes into consciousness through birth, may (or may not) be spiritually reborn and continually dies to be continually reborn.

In the days of the Goddess, around 8000 B.C., the arts of agriculture and stock breeding were first developed. Later, in the fertile lands between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in Mesopotamia (modern Iraq), the fundamentals of high civilization evolved: writing, mathematics, scientific observation, temple architecture and government by kings. Writing, in particular, probably was developed, not by "man," but by priestesses who began keeping temple records. The earliest example of writing yet discovered was found at the temple of the Queen of Heaven in the Sumerian city of Erech.

Kings in that day ruled, furthermore, because they were "loved"—that is, divinely approved—by the Goddess. Sargon of Agade (about 2350 B.C.), for example, was the first important ruler of a true power state in Mesopotamia. "Sargon am I, the mighty king, Monarch of Agade," the ancient records read; "while I was a gardener [one who makes the Earth Mother productive of the fruits of the fields] the Goddess Ishtar loved me. Then I ruled the kingdom."

Long ages before Sargon's rule, however, another crucial development had taken place: Men finally had begun to understand their own essential role in the creation of new life (although there still exist primitive tribes that do not understand the relationship between sexual intercourse and the birth, nine long months later, of a child). And to the mythology of the Goddess had been added the sacred Son and Consort—since in the mind of the ancients even a husband of the Goddess must first of all have been born of the Goddess.

"In one sense, speaking of God in male terms does have a limiting aspect, because any human expression about God is limiting. Yet when reference is given to God as male, especially as God the Father, that is certainly both Biblical and traditional. We now realize, however, that many of the earliest Hebrew references to God were not exclusively masculine, but became so in later translations.

"We earnestly seek to avoid any sexist language that would relegate women to second-class citizenship in the Church. But there remains a very weighty tradition of God as Father, especially in the sense of the Father looking after us as His children. We cannot say no to that tradition and go in other directions without the most careful study." — Father John Rotelle, Executive Director of the Bishops' Committee on Liturgy of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops

This sacred Son and Lover, through whose mystical union with the Goddess the continuation of all existence was guaranteed, usually was represented as an eternally dying and resurrected god, as the fields of the earth "die" each year to be reborn in the spring. He too had many names in many places—Tammuz, Damuzi, Attis, Osiris and Baal, aomng others—but the young male god remained secondary to the Mother. Until, that is, tribes of warrior nomads, herders of sheep, cattle and goats, began invading the predominantly agricultural Mediterranean world sometime around 3500 B.C.

Sweeping down from Indo-European grasslands or up from the Syro-Arabian deserts, the nomads gradually, over a period of roughly 2,000 years, overran the Mediterranean world. Their religion, from the earliest days, was different from that of the Great Mother. In the myths of the nomads, a young warrior god or even a supreme father god already was equal to or had taken precedence over a mother god.

To oversimplify only slightly, the role of women in nomadic societies simply had ceased to be as important as it was in the Mediterranean world. There, women had played the primary role in developing agriculture and building settled homes; had created, in effect, the most valuable economic resources of their societies. As a result, both family life and property still were conceived of in strictly matrilineal terms. A husband lived in his wife's house, property was handed down from mother to daughter; in many places the right to rule passed through the female line. (Even today one cannot properly be considered Jewish unless one is born of a Jewish mother.)

"In Egypt," the Greek historian Herodotus wrote in the fifth century before Christ, "the women go in the market place, transact affairs and occupy themselves with business, while the husbands stay home and weave." The patriarchal Greeks laughed at the henpecked Egyptians, but even after the Greek Ptolemies had conquered and ruled Egypt for 300 years (323 to 30 B.C.), the historian Diodorus Siculus could observe as late as 50 B.C. that in Egypt, "among private citizens the husband, by the terms of the marriage agreement, appertains to the wife, and it is stipulated between them that the man shall obey the woman in all things."

Generations of Egyptologists scorned poor old Diodorus as an unreliable dolt, until hundreds of actual marriage contracts were found showing that if anything, Diodorus had understated the matter. In these agreements, whereby men also delivered all their possessions to their wives, it was clearly stipulated that even if a wife should divorce her husband, she would continue to feed and clothe him, and see that he was properly buried.

The matrilineal organization of early societies, it is important to understand,

Whenever a symbol has attached itself to a reality in the minds of people through many centuries, it is serious and inappropriate to supersede the term. For that reason, I resist the idea of changing the male reference to the Deity. But just as strenuously I do not believe that the Reality we call God, whether Being, Process or Person, is to be conceived of as exclusively masculine. There are vivid fragments of feminine imagery in the Bible, images that we should release and elevate in sermons and hymns.

"No God is masculine and no God is feminine." — Dean Martin E. Marty, University of Chicago Divinity School

In one sense, speaking of God in male terms does involve a limiting aspect, because any human expression about God is limiting. The masculine name is given to God as male, especially as God the Father, that is certainly both Biblical and traditional. We now realize, however, that many of the earliest Hebrew references to God were not particularly masculine but became so in later translations.

"We certainly wish to avoid any sexist language that would relegate women to a secondary place, historically in the Church. But there remains a very weighty tradition of God as Father, especially in the prayers of the Father looking upon us as His children. We cannot easily go so far as that and go to other directions without the most careful study. — Father John Gurrieri, Executive Director of the Bishops' Committee on Liturgy of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops

did *not* mean complete female, or matriarchal, control. The extent to which women as the heads of families or clans actually ruled is unclear; there is strong evidence in some places but not in others. Still, women had great economic and legal power and enjoyed supreme respect; often they were the chief lawgivers or judges, even generals.

"Changing the traditional words we have used in worship creates many problems. To say, for example, 'Source of compassion' rather than 'Father of compassion' abandons the warmth of a personal relationship which the Hebrew text embraces. Saying 'Mother of compassion,' on the other hand, is just as sexist as saying 'Father.' To change the language of prayer also would mean changing the Biblical and Rabbinic texts.

"Rather than create new problems, it seems to me, we should retain traditional language, but stress that such language is symbolic and intended to help us relate to God in as powerful and personal a way as possible. The language of liturgy must be influenced by contemporary life; however, it is not a problem-solving social tool." — Rabbi Jules Harlow, editor and translator of prayer books published by the International Association of Conservative Rabbis

To the patriarchal nomads who gradually gained control of Greece, Asia Minor and the rest of the Near East, however, women were much less important. Property passed not from mother to daughter but from father to son.

A much more profound change in the whole structure of human thought and feeling was on the horizon. For eventually women ceased to be honored for the creation of life with the *help* of men and became instead mere carriers of the male's all-important seed. In the play *The Eumenides*, by the Greek poet Aeschylus, the god Apollo insists that "the mother is no parent of that which is called her child"; the only parent is "he who mounts." The Old Testament abounds with references to the importance of the male's seed and prohibitions against wasting it.

Thus the seed, or "male spirit," rather than the dark mystery of the womb, or the "flesh," came to be seen as the higher, more truly creative force behind the heavens and the earth. It was a critical turning point in human history. The conscious, rational and divisive side of the human psyche—today identified with "masculine" thinking—was beginning to overwhelm the deeper levels of the intuitive, irrational and associative side, now identified as "feminine."

The consequences for women were very great. Among other things, men developed a need to know without any doubt that the male child who would inherit their name and property was indeed their child and not some other man's. There is only one way a man can have such knowledge, however, and that is by making absolutely sure the woman who receives his seed was not, is not and never will be accessible to any other male. That she is, in short, his sole and exclusive property. Thus the importance of virginity, or "purity," at least for women, and prohibitions against adultery began to take on enormous psychic force in patriarchal societies.

For roughly a thousand years there was a kind of merger of the beliefs of the nomad invaders and the beliefs of those who still worshiped the Goddess, but eventually the male gods conquered all, as their followers conquered on earth, and became not only rulers of the Mother but in many instances Her murderer. In the late-Babylonian epic of Marduk, that young male god overcomes and kills his great-great-great-grandmother Tiamat—the Creator—to become King of the Universe. The theme of Marduk's conquest was repeated in many other late myths, until at long last the tales of creation boldly declared that one or another male god alone was the Creator.

Jewish and Christian women only recently have begun to understand the enormous extent to which the patriarchal world view shaped both the Hebrew and Christian scriptures. There is no question the Bible was compiled in the midst of a culture totally male-dominated, so that many Biblical passages were recorded in terms of male prejudices. Unfortunately, those passages, in addition, have been overinterpreted for 2,000 years as *theological* statements of God's will and intention that women should be subordinate to men.

Both the Old and New Testaments clearly affirm that God is spirit, of course, and as such totally transcends the human categories of male or female. Nevertheless, the use of almost exclusively masculine language in the Bible to describe God has led to centuries of imagining the Supreme Reality as a kind of superhuman "male" being, so that men and women alike have believed that if God was male, then to be male was to be more "like" God.

Yet the first passages in the Bible plainly state: "And God said, Let us make man [*'adham*, the Hebrew for "human being," not *'ish or Zākār*, the Hebrew for "male human being"] in our image. . . . So God created man [*'adham*] in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." (Genesis 1:26-27)

The Hebrew word used for God in the first-creation story, furthermore, is *Elohim:* "In the beginning *Elohim* created the heaven and the earth." Throughout the Old Testament, *Elohim* is also the most commonly used expression for the Supreme Reality (followed by *Yahweh:* "I am who I am" or "I will be who I will be"). *Elohim* is translated as "God" or the masculine singular "He." Yet *Elohim* is made up of *Eloh*—the feminine singular for goddess—and the masculine plural ending *im.* The word could be translated as either god or goddess. Or gods or goddesses.

"Certainly the imagery of our religion is too heavily masculine and patriarchal. The mystics, the true teachers of the Church rather than the theologians, always have maintained the mysterious balance between the masculine and the feminine in the Godhead. The question of women in the priesthood, however, is different. Jesus Christ, the Great High Priest and the only priest that Christianity recognizes, wears masculine form, and masculine form alone, for all eternity." — Episcopal Bishop Stanley Atkins, chairman of the Evangelical and Catholic Mission, an organization that refuses to recognize the ordination of women as priests

Biblical scholars long explained the plural (if not the feminine) form of *Elohim* as calling to mind the idea that the majesty of God is plural, many-sided, all-encompassing. And so it is. The question is, did the early Hebrews use *Elohim* to reflect their belief that God transcends but nevertheless includes masculine and the feminine? If so, why were there later, as scholars have now determined, so many hundreds of instances in the Hebrew scriptures in which deliberate changes were made from feminine to masculine terminology?

Without doubt it was because by the time the Hebrew scriptures actually were compiled, between roughly 900 and 300 B.C., it had become impossible for Hebrew males to express reverence for the Holy in any feminine terms whatsoever. How could they, when the position of women in their own society had fallen so low?

Women, according to the Old Testament, were little more than property, first of their fathers and then of their husbands. A father could sell his daughter as a slave if the man buying her intended to make her his concubine. A man's wife was always and clearly his possession, along with the land he owned, his slaves, his ox and his ass. Women had no economic or legal power; even their public vows meant nothing if

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"Changing the traditional words we have used in worship creates major problems. To say, for example, 'Source of compassion' rather than 'Father of compassion' abandons the warmth of a personal relationship which the Hebrew text embraces. Saying 'Mother of compassion,' on the other hand, is just as sexist as saying 'Father.' To change the language of prayer also would mean changing the biblical and Rabbinic texts.

"Rather than create new problems, it seems to me, we should retain traditional language, but stress that such language is symbolic and intended to help us relate to God in as powerful and personal a way as possible. The language of liturgy must be influenced by contemporary life; however, it is not a problem-solving social tool." — Rabbi Jules Harlow, editor and translator of prayer books published by the International Association of Conservative Rabbis.

their fathers or husbands vetoed them. (Small wonder that to this day Orthodox Jewish males pray: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord Our God, King of the Universe, who has not made me a woman.")

In the days of the Goddess there were laws that said if a man raped a woman, he should be put to death. According to the Old Testament, if a man raped a virgin, he simply was required to pay her father 50 shekels of silver "and she shall be his wife; because he hath humbled her, he may not put her away [divorce her] all his days." (Deuteronomy 22:28-29) If a man raped a betrothed virgin or the wife of another man (that is, violated the property of another male), then he *and the woman* were stoned to death.

Obviously, by 300 B.C. it could in no way have seemed proper to the priestly editors of the Old Testament to describe God in feminine terms—as easily speak of the Most Holy in terms of a man's other possessions!

The New Testament, strangely enough, does not transmit any sexist stories involving Jesus Christ. Strange, because the four Gospels, of course, actually were compiled by the followers of Jesus in what was still an extremely patriarchal world. According to the Gospels, however, Jesus broke with many of the anti-female conventions of his day. He stressed that God created humankind "male and female." Women followed Jesus in His ministry (in the face of restrictions against women's speaking with men in public), and women were the first witnesses of the most crucial event in the New Testament, the Resurrection—although the witnessing of the women, according to those who wrote the Gospels, had to be "verified" by the male apostles. Women by law were not competent to witness.

Nevertheless, women did play an active role in the early Church. It was only as Christianity became more and more accepted in the patriarchal Greco-Roman and Jewish cultures of that day that the leadership of women was denied or limited to women's groups or organizations. Precisely half of the Almighty's creation, the female principle itself, continued to be ignored for centuries, with only one major exception: the elevation by the early Church of the Virgin Mary.

The Virgin was elevated not as a goddess in her own right, of course, but as "the Mother of God," and as a woman personifying that most prized of patriarchal virtues, virginity. But the devotion to Mary, we are beginning to understand, had much more to do with certain basic religious hungers and impulses on the part of humankind than with the fact that she was the historical mother of Jesus Christ. For around images of the Madonna and the infant Son in her arms were quickly assimilated an absolutely astonishing number of the same symbols and images that once were associated with the first Great Mother.

In the Middle Ages the role of Mary grew so great that she often completely overshadowed both the Father and the Son; and an extraordinary amount of money, work and art went into the great cathedrals of Europe to venerate Her. Is it not marvelous that there are statues that depict Mary holding in one hand the entire world and in the other her baby Son, while a door in her body opens to reveal God the Father supporting the crucified Christ as all the saints look on—all within the womb of a virgin, the mother who produced her Son without help from mortal man (as did the ancient Goddess) and became the Mother of God, as the first Great Mother was the ancestor of all gods.

The Protestant Reformation, which swept the Virgin Mary off many of her pedestals, promised a great deal to women in some ways, but in the end, alas, delivered nothing. Martin Luther himself quickly decreed that women were to have nothing to do with "divine service, the priestly offices or God's word."

Whether Protestant, Catholic or Jewish, women remained children to be protected and controlled by men, children laboring under the old restraints imposed by such teachings as those of St. Augustine (A.D. 354 to A.D. 430): "The woman herself alone is not the image of God; whereas the man alone is the image of God as fully and completely as when the woman is joined with him."

A QUESTION OF CONSCIENCE

The question stunned the assembled bishops. Only one year earlier, in 1976, the General Convention of the Episcopal Church had voted, after years of controversy, to ordain women. Now, on September 30, 1977, the head of the Episcopal Church in the United States, Presiding Bishop John M. Allin, was addressing the opening session of the annual meeting of the House of Bishops and was asking this question: "Can you accept the service of a presiding bishop who is unable to accept women in the role of priests?"

In effect, Bishop Allin was offering to resign if his fellow bishops believed his opposition to the ordination of women was a serious hindrance to his leadership of the Church. "I have tried to keep an open mind," Bishop Allin explained, "but I have concluded that women can no more be priests than they can become fathers or husbands."

In the end, reaffirming the principle of "freedom of conscience," the House of Bishops supported the right of Bishop Allin to retain office despite his personal opposition to the Church's ruling in favor of women. The controversy continues, both within the Episcopal Church and among other groups.

Or this from St. John Chrysostom (A.D. 345 to A.D. 407): "The woman [Eve] taught once and ruined all. On this account . . . let her not teach . . . the whole female race transgressed." Five years ago, in 1973, the Bishop of Exeter publicly declared that the ordination of women by the Church of England would be a subtle shift toward the old pagan religions in which priestesses were common. "And we all know," the Bishop warned, "the kinds of religions they were."

Yes, indeed: "fertility cults," according to Victorian scholars, shocked at the overt sexual nature of the Goddess. For those who worshiped the Mother as "the One who walked in terrible Chaos and brought life by the Law of Love, and out of Chaos brought us harmony, and from Chaos has led us by the hand," did believe that the propagation of life was divine. That sex, along with everything else, was Her gift to humanity, and as such was sacred and holy. The ritual "marriages" that took place in ancient temples between priestesses, as representatives of the Goddess, and men, who represented the fertilizing power of the male Son and Lover, were undertaken as sacred, symbolic unions of the male and female principles, and were meant both to ensure and to show reverence for the ongoing fruitfulness of all life.

In their own languages, priestesses were described as "virgins" (meaning unmarried), "holy," the "sanctified women" or "the undefiled." Yet for years scholars translated those terms to read "prostitutes." Small wonder that scholars also could so oten and easily dismiss goddess worship in a sentence or two before moving on to the events of "male" history, could ignore such evidence as the following examples of ancient thought:

From Babylon, 1800 B.C.: "Unto Her who renders decision, Goddess of all things; Unto the Lady of Heaven and Earth who receives supplication; Unto Her who entertains prayer; Unto the compassionate Goddess who loves righteousness."

Egypt, 1400 B.C.: "In the beginning there was Isis: Oldest of the Old . . . the Goddess from whom all Becoming arose . . . Mistress of Heaven, Mistress of the House of Life, Mistress of the word of God."

The Old Testament: "Then all the men which know that their wives had burned incense unto other gods, and all the women that stood by, a great multitude . . . answered Jeremiah, saying: As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee. But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem: for then had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil." (Jeremiah 44:15-17)

The male prophets in the Old Testament constantly were having to remind Israel that it was folly to worship "other gods," sometimes actually named as Baal or Tammuz (the Son/Lover) or as Asherah, or Ashtoreth (the Goddess). The prophets did at last, however, overcome the Queen of Heaven, the Mistress of the House of Life—the feminine aspect of God.

Thereafter women were forbidden to study "male" Scriptures, to pray certain prayers, to speak with men in public, or

even to touch the hands of their own husbands if they were menstruating and thus "unclean." Brides were to be stoned if the "tokens of virginity" were not found on their wedding day. Women were admonished, as Paul (not Christ) admonished them, to obey their husbands and to keep silent in church.

Forced to become inferior, women were excluded on the grounds of their inferiority for centuries; and either from fear or love of God, now reshaped from transcendent, all-encompassing Being into a male being alone, women repressed any impulse to revolt. Not until the last century did a few courageous women begin to assert publicly that God had created the male and female equal and that women also should be allowed to serve God as clergy—along with such earthly privileges as the right to speak out against slavery and the right to vote.

"There is no sex in the Godhead. God is neither male nor female (and the point of Christ's Incarnation is that God became fully human in Jesus, not that God became fully male). We need to emphasize other terms for God in addition to 'Father'—terms such as 'Mother' or 'Creator' or 'Lifegiver.'"— Dr. Frederick K. Wentz, Executive Director of the Chicago Cluster of Theological Schools

Today there are roughly 1,500 female ministers among major Protestant denominations and perhaps another 3,000 among Evangelical and Pentecostal groups. There are a growing number of female rabbis among Reform and Reconstructionist Jews; by 1980, it is estimated, one of every 13 newly ordained Reform rabbis will be female. The recent dramatic increases in enrollment in both Jewish and Protestant seminaries are accounted for in large part by the dramatic increase in the number of female students.

Is it, then, all coming together for women at last? Perhaps. But the ordination of women and the nonsexist reinterpretation of the Bible by theologians and scholars are only beginning steps. So are the growing realization that God once was worshiped as female and the fascinating discovery by modern science that *all* human brains, male and female, have two hemispheres—the left (which controls the right side of the body), predominantly involved with "masculine" rational thought, and the right (which controls the left side of the body), predominantly involved with "feminine" intuition, body awareness and creative or artistic expression.

The masculine/feminine duality of life—and of the Almighty—is far from being truly integrated by the major faiths or secular society to date. Women are being ordained, but only a few are yet heads of synagogues or churches. After her ordination the Reverend Natalia Vonnegut returned by her own choice to the Julian Mission she had founded, but the mission originally was founded because there was no place for Mrs. Vonnegut, as an ordained deacon, at any church in the diocese of Indianapolis.

"Stop looking to the Church to provide new ministry," a male priest and close friend urged Mrs. Vonnegut in 1974. "Get out and do it yourself." So Mrs. Vonnegut did. With almost no money and only three part-time assistants, she created a "ministry of listening" to help troubled women, widows, battered wives, pregnant teen-agers, lonely and aging mothers with no confidence in their ability to function after their children were grown.

In little more than a year the Julian Mission—named for Lady Julian of Norwich, an English mystic of the late 14th and early 15th centuries and an active "listener" who touched the lives of many people—grew into a ministry to seriously troubled women all over Indianapolis, and then to men as well, to social-welfare agencies, even to male business establishments. Today Mrs. Vonnegut is being approached by people across the country eager to establish similar programs of ministerial outreach.

"I now believe," says Rev. Mrs. Vonnegut, "that in 'the fullness of time,' women have been called to do this work—to be ordained and to seek out new areas of oppression where the age-old nurturing skills of women—patience, sharing, communal effort, even vulnerability and a willingness to be open and emotional—can make an enormous difference."

Those are, after all, the very skills that male clergymen, permitted to be more aggressive in their young years, often must work to develop in order to be true shepherds to their pastoral flocks. "One thing women in outreach ministries certainly can do," Mrs. Vonnegut adds, "is help teach women historically conditioned to be dependent and passive that theologically the Word of God also means responsibility, here and now, for their own actions."

Dr. Claire Randall, the first woman General Secretary of the National Council of Churches, also sees a need to help women become more "aggressively responsible" as they move into positions of leadership within traditional church structures. "Over and over," Dr. Randall explains, "I've seen women who were natural leaders, intelligent and very articulate within women's groups, simply clam up in larger groups dominated by men. Women are conditioned to the idea that males lead and ladies follow."

During the years she worked for Church Women United, before her election as General Secretary of the National Council of Churches in 1974, Dr. Randall set up a number of workshops aimed at helping women learn more "aggressive" skills without losing the "feminine" skills they should be sharing with males. "Women, for instance, have less need, I believe," says Dr. Randall, "for hierarchical Church structures. They are less concerned with personal power than men."

The National Council now has a Commission on Women in Ministry actively involved in the problems of women enrolled in traditionally male seminaries and the problems of those who already have been ordained. "It's important that women be involved in regular ministries," Dr. Randall stresses, "to break certain barriers, to help reshape certain of the Church's traditional ways of relating to the world. To help us all think in new ways theologically."

In the late 1960s Dr. Randall developed for Church Women United, in co-operation with a Roman Catholic women's community called Grailville, a series of women's theological conferences that now are annual events. Catholic and Protestant women, both theologians and laywomen, meet each summer at "Women Doing Theology" at Grailville, in Loveland, Ohio, to re-examine the male theological concepts women have accepted for thousands of years and to search for additional truths relevant to the actual experiences and thoughts—even ancient myths—of women.

Among other things, "Women Doing Theology" has raised such questions as these: Is Eve (woman) to be condemned for eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge? For would humankind, without consciousness, be truly human? More important, is it not somehow idolatrous to describe God in anthropomorphic terms?

"Why indeed must 'God' be a noun?" the theologian Mary Daly asks in her book *Beyond God the Father*. "Why not a verb—the most active and dynamic of all? Hasn't the naming of 'God' as a noun been an act of murdering that dynamic Verb? And isn't the Verb infinitely more personal than a mere, static noun? The anthropomorphic symbols for God may be intended to convey personality, but they fail to convey that God is Be-ing."

Jewish women deeply involved with their faith also are questioning traditional concepts. Basically, women have been "exempt" from the religious study and communal prayer that is the core of traditional Judaism, the means whereby men strengthen their relationship with God. The woman's role centered almost exclusively on the home and—many feminists now say—primarily enabled a woman's husband and male children to fulfill *their* religious obligations.

"I am deeply Jewish and deeply feminist," says Rabbi Sandy Sasso, of the Manhattan Reconstructionist Havurah, in New York City. "There simply came a time when those two elements had to meet." She did not, she explains carefully, enter rabbinical school *because* she was a feminist. She became a feminist only during the course of her studies, amid a growing awareness of the way in which much in the Jewish heritage had relegated women to the role of second-class Jews. Women, no less than men, Rabbi Sasso believes, have an obligation to strengthen their relationship with God.

Moreover, Rabbi Sasso, now the mother of a young son, does not believe that

"There is no sex in the Godhead. God is neither male nor female (and the point of Christ's incarnation is that God became fully human in Jesus, not that God became fully male). We need to emphasize other terms for God in addition to 'Father'— terms such as 'Mother' or 'Creator' or 'Liberator.'"— Dr. Frederick H. [illegible], Executive Director of the Chicago Center of Theological Schools

rethinking traditional roles will weaken family life. On the contrary, she is convinced that just such re-examination and change, in the face of all the other forces now pulling families apart in our society, will strengthen family life. She and her husband, who is also a rabbi, have written a service to celebrate the birth of a daughter, called a Covenant for the Daughters of Israel, to mark the birth of female children as joyously and seriously as the birth of Jewish sons.

"Both the Hebrew and the Christian scriptures are the literature of patriarchal societies, even though male dominance was radically challenged and, in principle, abolished by Christ. Jesus accepted women as followers and set no sexual qualifications for apostolic ministry.

"There are as well clear examples of feminine figurative language for God in both the Old and the New Testaments. Such language does not, of course, mean that God is female, any more than the masculine language means that God is male. But it does mean that, in itself, feminine language is just as apt for talking about God as is masculine language."— Sister Sandra Schneiders, Jesuit School of Theology, Berkeley, California

Other Jewish women are working to expand their role in synagogues and religious courts. New prayer books are being written. An independent women's magazine has been established, called "Lilith," after the legendary predecessor of Eve who claimed to be Adam's equal and therefore was exiled from the Garden of Eden. One group has created a blessing to be recited upon the onset of every menstrual flow: "Blessed are You, O Lord Our God, and God of our foremothers and forefathers, who have set the moon in its path and have set the order of the cycles of life. Blessed are You, O Lord, who have created me a woman."

There is also the "Ceremony of the New Moon." Created by a group of Jewish feminists to express one unique aspect of women's spirituality, it is a ceremony in which candles are floated on water, prayers are said and crescent-shaped foods that contain sprouts and grains, the seeds of life, are eaten. All to mark the rebirth of life in female and lunar cycles—the same cycles celebrated by those who worshiped the Goddess.

The pendulum swings from one extreme to the other and sometimes rests. There is movement toward the center, a new balance for men and women, everywhere. In 1963 an international Catholic women's-rights organization called St. Joan's Alliance first dared to consider publicly the question of female priests in the Roman Catholic Church. The time seemed right; the 67-year-old Alliance, which grew out of the women's struggle for the vote in England, long had been fighting for equality and justice on many fronts. Even so, one long-time feminist who also served for many years as president of the United States Section of St. Joan's, Frances McGillicuddy, recalls that her first reaction to the ordination of women was tentative: Oh that's going a little too far, she remembers thinking, but then—why *not!*

Today the National Assembly of Women Religious (women in Catholic orders) also is asking "Why not?" So is the fast-growing Women's Ordination Committee (nuns and laywomen), organized in 1974, and Priests for Equality, an unofficial, 1,300-member organization of priests who support the ordination of women. The Women's Ordination Committee received hundreds of new membership inquiries immediately after the Pope's January, 1977, decision against female ordination. Priests for Equality sent an open letter to major women's groups, publicly apologizing for the "pain and frustration" the Pope's decision created.

On any given day Frances McGillicuddy, now retired from teaching school but still extremely active as the United Nations representative for the St. Joan's Alliance, can be seen sporting five or six buttons under the lapel of her suit jacket or dress. She simply flips up a lapel and there they are, all the slogans she's come up with over the years, from "Ordain Women Or Stop Baptizing Them" to "Mary Was a Feminist." The one button that sums up everything, however, is the one that says, simply and eloquently: "Equal Rites for Women."

Equal Rites. God the Father and God the Mother. The Ultimate Reality, ultimately transcending but nevertheless encompassing both the feminine and the masculine. Celebrated not in unfair favor of the feminine, as in the time of the Goddess, or in unfair favor of the masculine, as it has been over the last 3,000 years, but equitably, equally, reverentially, rightly, in favor of the All—the Almighty and the Almighty's sons *and* daughters, both partners with God in the ongoing cycles of creation, revelation and redemption. THE END

Elizabeth Rodgers Dobell is a free-lance editor and writer and a student of comparative religions. A Protestant, she was born in Hardy, Arkansas, attended Catholic schools in Arkansas, public schools in Tennessee, and was graduated from a Presbyterian college, Southwestern, at Memphis. While in college she served as state president of the Tennessee Christian Youth Fellowship. Her husband, Byron Dobell, is Jewish, and through him, she is related to several rabbis.

De Colores Metropolitan Community Church
7116 Alabama Avenue, Canoga Park
213-704-0524

Marge – thought you'd want to see this! Nancy ++

April 25, 1982
The Third Sunday of Easter
of Re-powering

* Community Stands

Recovery from Assault — a Spiritual Journey —

This worship ritual will be done in a circle, so that we can remember the inner-connectedness of the personal, the political, and the spiritual.

We are connected in song: HEY LITTLE ONE

1st Chorus: Hey Little One, why are you afraid
Hey Little One, just look my way
And I tell you I am all things
I am the storm,
I am the lightening and I will bring you sun.

verse 1 It seems that a storm is an angry thing to be
But sometimes its my anger that sets my spirit free
When I feel beaten like the tundra grass
Struggling to survive
I wonder if I'll see that sun alive. 1st chorus

verse 2 And yet I know if I listen and believe
If I set my feet a walkin
And allow myself to grieve
That this night of storm will pass through me
And I will bless the pain
Of my body being cleansed with sweet fresh rain.

2nd Chorus: Hey Little One, Come and run with me
Hey Little One, I'll set you free
I am the grace that brought you
To this promised land
I have watered you with a mother's hand!

We remember why we are afraid. We find power when we name our own fears.
We are connected by our fears.

Reader #1

The roots of rape run deep, imbedded in and nourished by a culture of male violence, protected by the silence of social taboo. For years women did not speak publicly of rape, incest, and other forms of sexual assault. Rapes become ugly secrets festering unseen in our bodies and our minds. They shamed us in our own eyes and made us ever more vulnerable to attack. We blamed ourselves, or kept quiet for fear others would blame us.

Reader #2

We are changing. For over a decade women have been speaking out on the atrocity of rape. We have challenged and, in some cases, changed the law and police and medical practices. We have learned to defend ourselves, individually and collectively. We have organized anti-rape squads, telephone hotlines, and rape counseling centers. By breaking the silence and taking action, we have cracked the narrow patriarchal mold that has shaped our lives. We have declared ourselves no longer victims.

Reader #3

And yet forcible rape continues to rank as the most frequently committed violent crime in America. According to the F.B.I., the number of reported rapes nationwide has increased steadily for more than a decade and jumped twelve percent during the first six months of 1980, as compared to the previous year. To avoid assault, we continue to curb our sexuality, stay home at night, walk warily even in daylight, and dress and speak with care for fear our T-shirts or our tones of voice might be misinterpreted as invitations to sex. When attacked, we still find it difficult not to blame ourselves. The difference today is that we are no longer isolated. We have the physical, social, and spiritual resources to empower and re-power ourselves.

Everyone: Yes, the difference today is that we are no longer isolated. We have the physical, social, and spiritual resources to empower and re-power ourselves!

Reader #4

Any form of sexual assault upon a woman is a political act in that it expresses and reinforces women's degraded position in our male-dominated culture. By the same token, the actions women take to prevent sexual assault, to initiate criminal—and sometimes civil—charges against the rapist, and to re-power ourselves after an attack are equally political. By asserting our power, we challenge deep-seated cultural assumptions about the submissive nature of the female and, in a very real sense, change the power dynamics between women and men.

Reader #5

In a culture that touts violent, aggressive acts as manly and views weak, submissive behavior as womanly, sexual assault is a logical extension of normal male-female relationships. The stereotype of the rapist as a crazed monster driven by inordinate or perverse sexual desires bears little resemblance to reality. According to studies of convicted rapists, most sexual assaults are premeditated and committed by men who are sane, sexually well-adjusted, and as likely to be friends, acquaintances, lovers, or relatives of their victims as strangers attacking women on dark streets. To challenge rape, which Susan Griffin aptly labeled the "All-American Crime" (*Ramparts*, Sept. 1971; also in *Rape/The Power of Consciousness*), is to challenge patriarchal culture itself.

Everyone: Silent Meditation
Take time to name what you are afraid of—

We re-connect in song: Sometimes I wish my eyes hadn't been opened—

verse 1
Sometimes I wish my eyes hadn't been opened
Sometimes I wish I could no longer see
All of the pain the hurt and the longing
My sisters and brothers that try to be free

verse 2 Sometimes I wish my eyes hadn't been opened
Just for an hour how sweet it would be
Not to be struggling, not to be striving
But just sleep securely in our slavery.

verse 3 But now that I see with my eyes I can't close them
Because deep inside me somewhere I'd still know
The road that my sisters and brothers must travel
My heart would say yes and my feet would say go.

verse 4 Sometimes I wish my eyes hadn't been opened
But now that they have I'm determined to see
That somehow my friends and I will be one day
The free people we were created to be.

Recovery From Rape: A spiritual journey

Everyone: To will does not mean that the world will conform to our desires — it means that we will: We will make our own choices and act so as to bring them about, even knowing that we may fail. Feminist spirituality values the courage to take risks, to make mistakes, to be our own authorities.

— Starhawk, *The Spiral Dance*

Reader #6

Rape is more than a physical and emotional shock; it is a brush with death and, in this sense, a profound spiritual experience for the victim. The raped woman's very existence has been threatened. She feels she can count on nothing, not the safety of her home, not even the solidity of the earth beneath her feet. Even when a rapist is successfully prosecuted, the victim often remains shaken at the deepest level of her being. To recover fully she must re-power herself spiritually as well as physically and emotionally. She must reaffirm — or perhaps discover for the first time — that essential part of herself which can never be victimized, her place of power within. In reclaiming her power, in refusing to be objectified and victimized, she will have engaged in a profoundly political act.

Reader #7

The means by which a woman can re-power herself are many. She can curse her rapist or forgive him, shout and scream or quietly center herself through deep breathing; she can cast spells, repeat affirmations, visualize the rapist being caught and herself becoming whole; she can take control of her dreams and/or take her attacker to court; she can invent and perform a full-scale healing ritual or simply hold hands and talk and cry with a friend. Her choice may be to do nothing more than give herself permission to feel depressed, scared, and angry. The methods she chooses are not as important as the fact that she chooses them.

Everyone: The methods she chooses are not as important as the fact that she chooses them.

Reader #8

The last thing a rape victim needs is someone telling her what to do. A therapist, friend, or doctor who, with even the best intentions, makes decisions for the victim is, in a sense, repeating an act of violation by once again taking away the assaulted woman's power. Feminist spirituality departs radically from traditional religion and standard forms of therapy in that it assumes each woman knows what is best for her and has the right to make her own decisions. The feminist counselor or friend views herself strictly as resource and catalyst. She listens to the assaulted woman, offers information and options, asks her preferences, and, once the woman has decided, supports her totally in her choices.

Everyone: We assume that each woman knows whats best for her and has the right to make her own decisions.

Silent Meditation
– take a moment to claim your right to choose!

We re-connect in song: Waterfall by Chris Williamson

Sometimes it takes a rainy day
Just to let you know everything's gonna be
alright, alright.

I've been dreaming in the sun
Won't you wake me up someone
I need a little peace of mind
Won't you wake me from this dream
I have dreamed so many times
I need a little piece of mind
O-oh, I need a little piece of mind.

When you open up your life to the living
All things come spilling in on you
And you're flowing like a river
The changer and the changed
You've got to spill some over
.... spill some over.... spill some over, over all.....

‖: filling up and spilling over
like an endless waterfall
filling up and spilling over, over all :‖ Repeat

like the rain falling on the ground ~
like the rain falling all around ~

Sometimes it takes a rainy day
Just to let you know everything's gonna be
alright, alright —

‖: filling up and spilling over
like an endless waterfall
filling up and spilling over, over all :‖ Repeat

Reader #9

"In feminist spirituality there is no formula for the victim of sexual assault; no spell, though there are lots of spells; no one thing to do, though there are lots of things to do," explains a minister whom I will call Maya, experienced in healing ritual and theater. "Whomever you work with — the woman who wants to curse or the woman who wants to heal — if it takes a year to do it, you have got to support her through that period in the way that works for her."

Reader #10

Maya found her ability to set aside her own biases and personal preferences tested when two of her friends were raped in separate incidents. Each asked Maya to help her, but in diametrically opposed ways. One woman, a member of a circle of women Maya was coaching, was brutally beaten during her rape, responded to her rapist with anger, and asked Maya, as an experienced ritualist, do a curse ritual. The second woman, one of Maya's closest friends, chose a path of total forgiveness. Feeling that hatred toward her attacker would be self-destructive, she chose to restrain her angry emotions and focus on healing herself. Maya respected both women's wishes completely even though she felt certain that, in the first case, the energy of the curse would, in some form, return to her, and, in the latter case, the process of recovery would be slow and frustrating.

Reader #11

The two radically different approaches to re-powerment chosen by Maya's friends indicate the range of spiritual techniques available to women who have been sexually assaulted. The curse involved a full-scale ritual, requiring several days of preparation and involving about twenty women, all friends of the rape victim. The operation was focused, intense, cathartic, and complete in itself. "The curse served as a catalyst for the woman to cleanse herself," explains Maya. "She got what she wanted and was able to move out of the energy created by the rape and become renewed."

...n example of a "curse" ritual comes from the Holy Scriptures:
...e connect with the rage of our ancestors, with women of all time.

...eryone: Rise, Yahweh in anger,
awake my God
Confront the raging of my enemies
You who demand that justice shall be done.
Psalm 7:6

I invoke you, Yahweh;
do not let me be disgraced
let the disgrace fall on the wicked!
May they go speechless to Sheol
their lying lips stuck dumb
for those insolent slurs on the virtuous
for that arrogance and contempt.
Psalm 31:17,18

Shame and dishonor on those
who are out to kill me! Psalm 35:4a

a curse on him who sleeps with his sister,
the daughter of his father or of his mother."
And all the people shall say: amen. Deut. 27:22

Reader #12

For the friend who chose the path of forgiveness the recovery process took a year and was interrupted by a series of illnesses. "I made myself available to her in every way I could," said Maya. "I prayed with and for healings on her, helping her cleanse her energy and ground out her illness. I gave her space to cry, to talk, to feel the emotion of what was happening. Sometimes we just sat together holding hands and felt healing energy flow through us." Eventually, the friend shed her illnesses and became whole and strong again.

An example of "forgiveness" ritual comes from the Holy Scriptures. We connect with the compassion of our ancestors, of women of all time.

Everyone: 'Be compassionate as your God is compassionate. Do not judge, and you will not be judged yourselves; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned yourselves; grant pardon, and you will be pardoned. Give, and there will be gifts for you: a full measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be poured into your lap; because the amount you measure out is the amount you will be given back.

Luke 6: 36-38

'I tell you solemnly once again, if two of you on earth agree to ask anything at all, it will be granted to you by God in heaven. For where two or three meet in my name, I shall be there with them.'

Matthew 17: 19, 20

Then one of the disciples went up to the Christ and said "how often must I forgive my brother if he wrongs me? As often as seven times?' Jesus answered, 'Not seven, I tell you, but seventy-seven times.

Matthew 17: 21, 22

Silent Meditation

... curse or forgiveness? ... or something else

Reader #13

As powerful and cathartic as group ritual can be, it is not appropriate for all women. Some, like Maya's close friend, prefer to release their fear, grief, and anger in small spurts, rather than a single emotional outburst. A rape victim, especially, may feel too vulnerable to engage in intense group activity.

Reader #14

One very private way a woman can re-power herself is by working with her dreams. Karen Hagerman, a licensed clinical psychologist on the staff of Bay Area Women Against Rape in Berkeley, finds dreamwork remarkably effective for rape victims plagued with nightmares. Many learn to reverse roles in their dreams, switching from victim to attacker. "Dreams are the language of the unconscious," explains Hagerman. "Like rituals, they tap the symbolic content of the mind." Hagerman sometimes recommends a dream incubation ritual to women who seek guidance in resolving specific issues around their rape experience. Ideally, the ritual involves several days of preparation. First, the woman visualizes a guide and draws a picture of this being; then she reflects on the problem and writes out her thoughts; finally, she pictures a special dreaming place and sketches that. For the dreaming itself, she goes to her special place—either physically, if it exists on that level, or in her imagination. Often, insights and solutions blocked by the woman's conscious mind will surface in her dreams.

Reader #15

Another woman, Levanah Shell Bdolak, frequently gives her clients ways of working on their own to release the energy from emotional blocks. When rape is involved, she often suggests a visualization in which the woman puts the rapist in a suitcase, locks it, and blows it up, sending all his energy back to him and reclaiming her own energy for herself. She recommends that the woman repeat this as many times as necessary to free herself of obsessive playbacks of her memory of the assault.

Reader #16

Bdolak does not believe in cursing. According to her, in traditional curse the person sends her own energy out to the rapist or other target with the risk that it will rebound, in some form, to her. Maya, the woman mentioned earlier, attributes a concussion she received in a traffic accident two months after her curse ritual to this bounce-back phenomenon. For her it was an unmistakable signal that the curse had been effective and the cycle was complete. While Maya does not regret her decision to curse she admits she would do so again only in the direst of circumstances and would perform the operation differently. Bdolak suggests that, instead of cursing the woman turn the rapist's own energy against him. She need simply imagine herself a mirror reflecting back his hostile thoughts and feelings. But, Bdolak adds, this works best after the sender has neutralized her own feelings of anger. If the woman finds this difficult, she can ask a neutral person to gather and return the rapist's energy for her.

Reader #17

In her book, Budapest also includes instructions for two simple yet dramatic post-rape rituals. In one the friends of the assaulted woman give her a scented bath, rubbing her back, speaking to her soothingly, and strewing the water with flowers they have freshly gathered. In the other, intended for a woman who has been raped in her own bed, the participants ceremonially burn the bedsheets and take the mattress outside to be bleached pure again by the sun.

Reader #18

Most of us have little experience with authentic ritual. Those we have encountered at church or at public functions are often mere formulas, either devoid of content or feeling or laden with guilt and judgment. Authentic ritual follows no formula, although it contains a simple, yet essential structure. This structure is natural to the act of celebration and is found, wholly or partially, in everything from birthday parties to protest rallies. It embodies five basic elements: setting apart and purifying a special place; invoking the greater powers, whether these be the elemental forces, the Goddess and/or God, or simply universal energy; raising the level of energy, through chanting, dancing, music, or such, until a point of emotional catharsis is reached; celebrating, usually with food, drink, and merriment; and, finally, completing the process by consciously opening the circle and sending the energy generated by it out to serve a purpose in the world. Working within this basic structure, any group of women willing to speak, move, chant, and dance from their hearts can create rituals of re-powerment for themselves, their sisters, and the world.

anyone: We need to connect emotionally for re-powerment to become a reality.

We give thanks for opening our minds, hearts, and spirits to new possibilities, new ways at looking at healing, and that there can be life after assault. Amen

lent meditation
song of hope: Come Fly With Me

We affirm together:

We will not live as victims. We must dig deeply into the roots of our experience, extract all such feelings and throw them into the face of the patriarchy, replacing them with our strength and power, thereby entering a new dimension of life—leaving all rapists behind with no victims to be found.

—Marco Adair, teacher of Applied Meditation

Reader #19

A woman is hospitalized. For years she has suffered sexual abuse at the hands of her therapist. Her spirit finally rebels. She perceives herself as a victim and goes mad with rage. Night after night, her sisters, the members of her coven, visit her. In a private room they chant with her, help her breathe, bring her back to center; they guide her on journeys into her unknown depths, help her release anger and fear, then celebrate her victories with cakes and wine and good talk.

We bring our gifts and share in the meal

Reader #20

"Without my sisters I would be in a back ward today, alone and in pieces," she tells me softly. "They gave me what no hospital, no therapist could give: They made it possible for me to retain my integrity." The woman is no longer hospitalized, no longer victim. Today she is a warrior exposing with a lawsuit the abuse she received in the name of medicine; she is an artist incorporating visual art with sacred, healing dance; she is healer and woman, transforming the world as she transforms herself.

Women today are not fighting back alone, nor are we healing only ourselves. As Susan Griffin observes in *Rape/The Power of Consciousness*, "Our very selfish motion, to heal ourselves, to tend to our own wounds, may turn out to be the most radical motion of all, one that heals not only ourselves but eventually all, and thus transforms the social order absolutely." Increasingly, we are making the connection between our private pain and our collective oppression, and we are responding publicly.

Reader #21

On a sunny June day in 1980, scores of women gather in a meadow near the top of Mount Tampalpais. This peak, located several miles north of San Francisco and considered sacred by the Native Americans, had been the scene of the brutal murder of a young woman the previous spring and of other murders and numerous rapes over the years. The women hold hands in a circle. They breathe together in silence.

They speak together:

Everyone:

We are here to remember our sisters who have died on this mountain.
We are here to remember that although we have been compared to this Earth,
We are not allowed to walk it in safety,
And we are not allowed to walk it alone.

Reader #22

The circle of women send their pain and anger into the Earth, asking that it be changed into energy for action; they invoke the women of the past, the ancient fore mothers and sisters, the healers, the women burned as Witches, the women who tended the land, all women past and present who have been oppressed and have fought back. They chant again and again, "I am a woman, my will is unbending," sending the words and their energy out in webs to surround and reclaim the mountain.

Reader #23

We are learning we need never be victims. Rape will not disappear tomorrow, even as we continue our long-range struggle to spread postpatriarchal mores throughout the legal system and society in general. Assaults are perpetrated in order to paralyze and cripple our psyche—*but they cannot*. Our spirituality has taught us the reality of transformation: By not ignoring pain and anger but, rather, acknowledging it, naming it, and feeling it so totally that the energy bound within us is released, we are free to live fully once again. Nothing can stop our movement toward a new culture in which, ultimately, rape—whether of women or of the Earth—will be unthinkable.

Benediction: everyone together
We leave this place knowing, that someday, rape—whether of women or of the Earth will be unthinkable. Amen.

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'MAN TALK' SYNDROME

Inequality of Sexes Is Part of Language

By PAUL GALLOWAY
The Chicago Sun-Times

The First Amendment to the Constitution guarantees the right of free speech, but unfortunately—and probably understandably—the Founding Fathers omitted a protection of equal speech. This is a fundamental right that is still to be achieved between men and women but is essential to form a more perfect union.

It's a self-evident truth (to borrow from another document) that inequality between the sexes includes the way men and women talk to each other. All you have to do is listen. Listen to others, and listen to yourself.

This difference goes beyond the sexual nuances that can be overt or implicit in many exchanges between male and female. Much of the social intercourse between men and women has sexual overtones or undertones—a tension or flirting, a kind of verbal mating dance that often is innocent, conditioned and automatic.

This difference also has nothing to do with the subject of a conversation. Sure, men don't usually discuss sports or business or their latest sexual escapades—traditional topics of "man talk"—with women.

I'm referring to a difference that exemplifies the way too many of us men generally perceive women and their status as fellow human beings. It's not a respectful perception, and it's related to the rationale of the women's movement. It goes to the problems women have with getting fair and equal treatment in this society.

The difference is this: Men tend to talk down to women, and they tend to interrupt them far more than women interrupt men.

Men tend to patronize and condescend to women in conversation. The tone can be much as a parent speaks to a child, a master (or mistress) of the house speaks to a servant or a member of a race or nationality speaks to a member of another race or nationality that the speaker believes is inferior to his.

Men feel superior to women, and this comes across in the way we talk to them most of the time. We're bigger and stronger physically, and because we have historically been the breadwinner, the man with the job, we feel more important. We play the tough physical games; we run governments and businesses; we fight the wars, and this translates into the idea that we're better.

And in the past women have acquiesced to the "father-knows-best" concept, the "he-wears-the-pants" syndrome. They have played the roles that follow such a dominant-supportive model. They have been clinging vines, dumb blondes, Southern belles and loyal helpmates to their he-men.

This comes out in our conversations, especially with women we don't know. We sometimes pay no attention at all to an important fellow's wife. She's simply with him. "I want you to meet Bill's wonderful wife!"

I can't document this, but I've observed it and become more aware of it, on some occasions because women called attention to it.

This superior attitude also reveals itself in interrupting women, and this can be documented, although I have been called on this, too, by women who finally have gotten fed up.

It's true that interruptions can be all-inclusive. Many of us interrupt people regardless of race, color, creed and national origin as well as gender.

But if you want some evidence that it occurs glaringly in male-female conversations, I refer you to a paper titled "Sex Roles, Interruptions and Silences in Conversation," which can be found in "Language and Sex: Difference and Dominance," (Newbury House, 1975).

In their study, Don H. Zimmerman and Candace West examined transcripts of two-party conversations that were recorded in public places without the knowledge of the people who were speaking. (OK, it's scientific eavesdropping.)

All the subjects were white, middle-class and between 20 and 35 years of age, but check around yourself and see if this doesn't hold up for all of us.

There were 31 conversations: 10 between two women, 10 between two men and 11 between a man and a woman.

Zimmerman and West checked for simultaneous speech overlaps (where the current speaker has reached a point in her utterance that can be treated as a complete sentence completion point; the protest here would be: "You interrupted me") and interruptions (a non-speaker begins to talk at a point in the current speaker's utterance, which cannot be viewed as a possible sentence completion point; the protest here would be, "You interrupted me").

In the woman-woman and man-man conversations, they found seven interruptions and 22 overlaps, which were equally divided between the two speakers.

But in the male-female conversations, they found 48 interruptions and nine overlaps, which showed a "dramatic" division between man and woman. Ninety-eight percent of the interruptions and all the overlaps were made by the men.

In the same-sex conversations, "the distribution of silence was nearly equal. But in cross-sex conversations, females showed more silence than males; women tended to fall silent for noticeable periods of time after being interrupted," the authors found.

Copy to Marge Ragona

A Religion for Women: Sources and Strategies

Rosemary Ruether

ALL FEMINISTS working in the area of religious ideas have some recognition of the revolutionary nature of the women's question when addressed to traditional patriarchal religions, such as Christianity and Judaism. Some regard this as an integral reform that does not touch the substance; a matter of better translation and exegesis which will reveal that Jesus (or Moses) was actually a feminist, although no one managed to notice this until now. Others regard the change as so fundamental that it must bury all patriarchal faiths forever in the scrap heap of history as outworn and, indeed, demonic world views. Most religious feminists fall somewhere in between, although just where in between and on what grounds they are by no means certain.

In this essay, I would like to address myself to that branch of the feminist spirituality movement that has rejected biblical religion and turned to the alternative religion of the Goddess. One advocate of this perspective is Naomi Goldenberg in her recent book, *Changing of the Gods: Feminism and the End of Traditional Religions* (Beacon Press). Other advocates are Carol Christ, editor of *Womanspirit Rising* (Harper and Row); leaders of feminist Wicca, such as Starhawk and Zsuzsanna E. Budapest (both represented in Christ's collection), and the magazine *Womanspirit*. The movement has had several national gatherings, such as the conference on the Return of the Goddess organized by Carol Christ at Santa Cruz, Calif., in 1978. Starhawk's book, *The Spiral Dance: The Rebirth of the Ancient Religion of the Great Goddess* (San Francisco, Harper and Row), is forthcoming this month.

I would like to address two questions to this movement.

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First, what is the basis of their total rejection of biblical religion for feminists? Second, how helpful is the specific alternative religion that they offer as the means of making the changes which they desire—and which I and other feminists who find *some* things helpful in the Bible also desire? In the process, I hope to clarify areas of both agreement and disagreement between myself and them, and also to suggest principles for a feminist critique of male-dominated culture.

Goldenberg's book is a useful way into the outlook of this movement, both because she presents goddess religion as the alternative faith, and also because, from her perspective as a Jewish student trained in theological studies who is also a student of psychoanalysis, she makes certain specific arguments for the rejection of patriarchal religions, particularly Judaism and Christianity. Her view that Yahweh and Christ must be completely rejected by feminists rests on her belief that these religious figures are fundamentally male in their identity. They were shaped by males principally to deify themselves and to sanctify the power of men over women in patriarchal societies. I would be disposed to take this assertion very seriously. Although I don't think it is the whole truth about these figures, it is much more deeply true of the way they have actually functioned culturally than most feminists, as well as traditional theologians, have been willing to grant.

Anyone who is disposed to take these assertions lightly should contemplate the recent Vatican Declaration against women priests, where it is said that there must be a *physical* resemblance between the priest and Christ (i.e., the possession of a penis is the essential element for the representation of Christ) and that the divine-human relationship is essentially one of maleness to femaleness. Most of us, with a minimum of theological culture, could easily point to alternative traditions (the tradition of apophatic theology forbids us to regard any human image of God as other than an analogy; Thomas à Kempis obviously has different ideas about what constitutes imitation of Christ than physical resemblance!). Nevertheless, something is going on here that clearly prompts otherwise responsible church leaders to blurt out astonishing statements as soon as the maleness of God or Christ is touched by the possibility of the female presence.

Incarnation and the Unconscious

Although it may not be true, in terms of strict theological tradition, that maleness can be literally ascribed to God or regarded as *essential* to the incarnation of God in Christ, operationally the psychic identification between these figures and male identity is very deep. So much so that when the very idea of severing the connection between the two is suggested, we witness, again and again, what amounts to a public "freak-out" by church leaders and teachers. After a couple of encounters with this kind of behavior, it is not surprising when some women conclude that they ought to clear out of the church (or the synagogue) and find a women's religion.

Goldenberg draws additional arguments against female identification with Yahweh or Christ from her psychoanalytic training. She believes that continued identification with father-gods represents, for women, unresolved oedipal dependency. In the Freudian tradition, oedipal depencency represents the inability to achieve an autonomous superego whereby persons appropriate and claim their own values and take responsibility for their identities as adults. Those who have not achieved this remain childish and stupid. They cover their fear of autonomy with irrational arguments and compulsive behavior.

Freud believed that women have an even harder time than men in achieving an autonomous superego because of the lack of a penis and hence of castration anxiety. They fixate their desire for a penis on their fathers, from whom they hope to receive what they lack—i.e., a penis, or the right to autonomous identity and authority. Freud thought this was okay, since it allowed women to transfer this dependency to their husbands and find fulfillment in producing male babies. For Freud, the fact that this also meant that women never grew up intellectually or morally or became responsible adults was a small price to pay for the docility of wives to their husbands.

Goldenberg takes this analysis very seriously. She believes that the ultimate way women remain dependent, when earthly fathers and husbands fail, is to transfer their hopes to the heavenly Father and his Son. That way they can stay stupid and infantile to eternity. Since Goldenberg (unlike Freud) wants women to grow up and become adults capable of thinking for themselves, she thinks that the heavenly father and his son must go. I would agree that this is probably the way God and Christ have functioned for a lot of women.

I find Goldenberg's feminist revision of Freud and Jung particularly useful. (The quotation from myself that appears on the dust jacket of the book was actually written to endorse her doctoral thesis giving a feminist critique of Freud and Jung, not this book.) I have always found Freud somewhat enraging and consequently have never studied him very deeply. As a student of classics and history of religions, I spent considerably more time sojourning in the world of Jung, since Jungians figure heavily in the scholarship on ancient mythology. Gradually I realized that the Jungian seduction by "feminine archetypes" was just as debilitating to me as a woman as Freud's patriarchal contempt.

Goldenberg has been able to recover what is prophetic and liberating in these two psychoanalytical schools, without in any way capitulating to their sexism. She finds particularly valuable Freud's critique of oedipal dependency and its ties to patriarchal religion. She also endorses Jung's desire to liberate our fantasy life from the censorship of normative revelation. She wants to liberate these elements of their thought for feminism.

At the same time she is able to show with devastating clarity Freud's and Jung's failures to apply their liberating insights to women. In fact, they used their psychoanalytic discoveries to reinforce the sexist oppression of women. Psychoanalysis became the replacement of patriarchal religion in giving the new, scientific sanction to women's subjugation. Goldenberg's reappropriation in feminist terms of what is liberating in Freud and Jung and her critique of their sexism are not in contradiction. They are two sides of the same analysis. Her discovery of their liberating potential is, at the same time, the critical tool for unmasking their sexism.

Authority and Patriarchal Tradition

This is what I would see as the key to authentic feminist critique of culture. What is puzzling is that it does not occur to Goldenberg that one could do the same thing with

biblical religion. There seem to be several reasons. One reason, as she acknowledges in the book, is that these religious authorities are still too intimidating for her. She must free herself completely from any dependency on patriarchal authority. She must "kill the father" in order to free herself. But this also indicates that rejection can function as unresolved dependency. As long as one has to keep knocking Moses and Jesus, one is still basically responding to them as oppressive fathers, not encountering them in the way Goldenberg encounters Freud and Jung—as human resources that might have some liberating things to say, as well as some cultural limitations. It is dangerous to extrapolate from this type of rejection (as she, Carol Christ and Mary Daly all tend to do) that only the rejectors are "radical," while those who find usable things in the biblical tradition are mere "reformers."

I realize that it is not that easy to achieve this kind of liberation. Moses, Jesus and God the Father are ultimate sanctions for age-old cultures. Anything good you might say about them might be mistaken by others, or operate for you, as an apologia. But Freud and Jung are certainly the heavies of Goldenberg's psychoanalytical training whose authority justifies a lot of sexism. Part of feminist liberation is to discover that there is not that much difference between these two kinds of authority. We can interact with the Bible, as much as with any other area of male-biased culture, with the same discriminating freedom.

There is another problem with all these writings that reject biblical religion, not only Goldenberg's but also Daly's, Starhawk's and, to some extent, Christ's. All of them speak of biblical ideas in an extremely simplistic way that makes one think that they had never studied this document at all! In other words, they see the Bible through a screen of hostile caricature that ignores almost all of its actual content.

If anyone wrote about any other religion in the way they write about Judaism and Christianity, one would be inclined to characterize them as ignorant bigots. Since we know that Christ, Goldenberg and Daly all have advanced theological degrees, one must assume that something else is going on here. Their hostility to these religions has become so great that the Bible has become a closed book to them, on the cover of which is inscribed one word: patriarchy. They remind me a little bit of the way I tend to react to Freud. My hostile feelings toward him are so great that I have never read him seriously except to knock him. But at least I know, theoretically, that there is more to Freud than patriarchy.

If I were to convince Goldenberg that the Bible does have some liberating insights, she still might not be that interested in taking it up. I don't expect her to get excited about the Bible because I am, any more than I am going to get excited about Freud because she is. What I do expect from feminist thinkers is a respect for the integrity of the quest in different cultural contexts. This respect should not be confused with uncritical tolerance for every cry of eureka that might go up from women digging for feminist gold in the barren rock of patriarchal culture.

If Goldenberg tells me that Freud and Jung are not all bad and the Goddess will set me free, I expect to look long and hard at the ideas that she is displaying for my admiration to see if they are adequate to my needs. If they are not, I expect to tell her why, not to refute her, but to challenge her to go farther. If she denies the adequacy of what I have done, I expect to be able to point out what she may have missed. In other words, I expect critical discussion.

What I don't expect from feminists is facile anathemas and excommunications of women working in any major area of human culture or experience. When feminists begin to exclude from their gatherings women who have heterosexual relationships or (as happened at a recent conference in Boston) women with male children, or when they declare that a feminist can't be a Christian or a religious Jew, I find that unacceptable.

Transforming the Inheritance

I believe that we must recognize two things: (1) Practically all the inherited culture that we have received from a male system of tradition has been biased. It tends either to ignore or directly sanction sexism; (2) All significant works of culture have depth and power to the extent that they have been doing *something else* besides just sanctioning sexism. They have been responding to the fears of death, estrangement and oppression and the hopes for life, reconciliation and liberation of humanity. They have been doing this on male terms. But women can discover this critical element and apply it to themselves. In so doing, they will not leave it as it was, but transform it in profound ways. They will make it say things it never said before.

We don't have to start *ex nihilo*. We have had teachers who gave us tools to wield for our liberation, and most of them were male. We should be adult enough to acknowledge that without chagrin. Thereby we begin to discover the common ground of our humanity.

What is the critical or liberating tradition in the Bible? This is what I would call the prophetic-messianic tradition. Unlike most of Christian theology, the Bible, for the most part, is not written from the standpoint of world power, but from the standpoint of people who take the side of the disadvantaged; the rural population against the landowners and urban rich; the small colonized nation against the mighty empires. In the New Testament, this is continued in the perspective of the underclass of the Roman Empire. This inclines the Bible to a view of God as One who does not take the side of the powerful but who comes to vindicate the oppressed. God judges those who "grind the faces of the poor, the widow and orphan"; God "puts the mighty down from their thrones and fills the poor with good things."

This standpoint can lead to a variety of moods. But basically it means that the God-language of the Bible tends to be judgmental and destabilizing toward the existing social order and its hierarchies of power; religious, social and economic. This is a very significant perspective. Given that much of world religion has functioned ontocratically to provide a "sacred canopy" by which the existing order is stabilized, its leaders vested with divine rights and its subjects admonished to be obedient, the prophetic God who takes the side of the poor, drowns the horsemen of Pharoah and leads the slaves out of Egypt is a God who undercuts the agenda of most of what has been identified as "religion."

The primary vision of salvation in the Bible is that of an alternative future, a new society of peace and justice that will arise when the present systems of injustice have been overthrown. This vision becomes increasingly apocalyptic as the Bible moves into the era when Israel despairs of immediate hopes. In the New Testament, it gradually loses its base in social hope altogether and becomes "other-

worldly." And yet its roots remain those of social criticism and the hope for an alternative society on this earth. In the preaching of Isaiah, repeated by Jesus, the vision of the "acceptable year of the Lord" is defined as "good news to the poor, release of the captives, recovering of sight to the blind, setting at liberty those who are oppressed." (Is. 61:1-2; Lk. 4:18-19)

Finally, both Testaments contain, as a part of this prophetic perspective, a remorseless critique of religion. This attack is directed at degeneration of religion into cult and rote, especially the use of religion to justify those already in power and to ignore God's agenda of social justice. Amos cries out, "I hate, I despise your feasts, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies; . . . take away from me the noise of your songs . . . But let justice roll down like waters" (Amos 5:21-24). The Synoptic Gospels are framed as a continual confrontation between the iconoclastic messianic prophet and the scribal and priestly leaders who "tithe mint and cummin and neglect the weightier matters of the law; justice, and mercy and faith" (Mt. 23:23). Needless to say this is not an attack on "Judaism," but the flowering of Judaism and the prophetic critique of alienated and self-sanctifying religiousness.

Usable Pieces

The prophetic tradition can only be recovered by a thoroughgoing criticism of the way Christianity has generally functioned. It is also the case that this critical perspective is not explicitly applied to women in the Bible, although there is evidence of disputes about this in the New Testament. As is the case with all critical principles in inherited culture, women must learn how to apply these to themselves. In sum, it is not some particular statements about women's liberation, but rather the critical pattern of prophetic thought, that is the usable tradition for feminism in the Bible . . . and in Freud!

Having suggested what I regard as the methodology of a feminist critique of culture, I would like to explore the alternative proposed by the feminist spirituality movement. Goldenberg recommends a free exploration of our fantasy life. Any useful image may be liberating for us, although it is not necessarily a norm for everyone. But, in fact, she ends up dogmatizing a particular alternative—namely, feminist Wicca—as the religion we all should adopt if we are to be saved from sexism.

Feminist Wicca is a modern version of the ancient cult of the Mother Goddess and the King. Wicca "wymin" believe that this religion, shaped by and for women, was handed down as a secret feminist cult by persecuted bands of women (witches) through the millenia of patriarchal power and has now emerged as the Old Time Religion of women's liberation. I have some historical problems with this. Goldenberg does too, but she dismisses the importance of the unhistoricity. If it works well enough as myth, it doesn't matter if it didn't actually happen that way.

I am not opposed to the adoption of images from Goddess religion as a valid source of spirituality. As a classicist, I became acquainted with the cult of the Goddess 25 years ago and remain tolerably fond of the Great Mother. If you asked me what my image of God was, I would say something like: "She is the One who is the Matrix of all Being, the source of both all that is and all that might be, the font of life and the renewal of life in new and redeeming patterns. This great Matrix is neither male nor female, the foundation of the authentic personhood of both men and women. I prefer to think of Her as She in personal prayer, but I would not dogmatize that preference as a universal."

I would not say, however, that this god-language came to me from the remnants of the cult of the Great Mother, because, in fact, that died and does not come down to us as living tradition today. I appropriate aspects of the Great Mother only through the medium of a long and complex theological history, which has been shaped by males: the biblical Creator and Redeemer; Greek and Christian Logos theology; Tillich's Ground of Being, etc. In no way can I pretend to have learned this from some secret coven of women passing down an alternative religion. My image is a synthesis of the theological trends of the Western Christian tradition, which I have put together in such a way that it connects with my experience.

We have to be culturally honest. Cultural honesty is not just an exercise in intellectual fastidiousness. It is the only way to save ourselves from jumping out of the frying pan into the fire. The problem with reviving the cult of the Goddess and the King as a feminist religion is that this was not, in fact, shaped by women for women's liberation. It was shaped by men to make themselves kings of the world. It did this in a more humble and earthbound way than Judaism or Christianity, but it did it nonetheless.

The cult of the Goddess and the King came from an earlier stage of patriarchal culture when the male leadership class felt itself very vulnerable to the forces of chaos and very dependent on the lifegiving powers of nature to restore both fertility and order to society. These two aspects of nature were imaged as Mothers: Tiamat, the Chaos-Mother, and Ishtar (Anath), the Mother of renewed natural and social life. As Marduk, the King slays the Chaos-Mother and orders her body into the universe. As Tammuz (Ba'al), the King represents the rain and vegetation that is resurrected from death and reinstated as Lord, espousing the Mother as wife and, through her, bringing the new grain, new lamb and new child. This was good stuff for many millenia. Men at that time were apparently not arrogant enough to visualize God as a male ego transcendent to the matrix of coming-to-be-and-passing away. They knew they had to make it as favored sons of the Great Mother. But it still has to do with putting male kings on the thrones of the world, not with liberating women or slaves.

The problem with using this story uncritically as a feminist religion is that one thereby releases into ritual action a pattern of relationships that has not been properly understood. For example, one imports into it the female-male, nature-culture dualism of 19th century romanticism that was foreign to it.

Symbolic Reversal

But the most important problem with making this story a feminist religion is that doing this means turning around the point of human identification, i.e., identifying women with the Goddess, rather than linking the human community to the Goddess through the King, as was the original meaning. The result is that Wicca religion, as described by Goldenberg, Z. Budapest and others, makes women the overwhelmingly dominant partners. The males present are reduced to son-lovers of the Great Mother.

These writers typically speak about males in their

groups in a very patronizing way. They claim to accept them. But, repeatedly, their descriptions allow men only two roles, sons and "sex-objects," both of which belong to the Mother. This sounds like a reversal of the roles assigned to women in the patriarchal religions they reject.

I submit that a religion with this cultic pattern would do as much psychic harm to men as patriarchy has done to women. It would certainly suggest that men can never grow up and become genuine peers of the women. It would also make women megalomaniacal and lacking in self-criticism. There are some unpleasant hints of this in Goldenberg's description of the use of magic to manipulate the world to one's wishes and punish enemies. Having taken the stance of the convert from evil patriarchy to the true religion, one dogmatically insulates the cult against internal questioning. Can this kind of self-protectiveness really advance the struggle for liberation?

Feminist Wicca needs to be discussed in much greater detail, but what has been said is enough to indicate why it has not resonated with my vision of feminism as human liberation. This does not mean that women shouldn't go on exploring their experience, as well as patterns of goddess religions. But if these are to give us a better religion than we have now they must be integrated into the best insights we have developed in our culture to discern what is humanizing and what is pathological. As that takes place, we may have a new religion. But it will have so appropriated the best of the old that it could as easily be said to be the renewal of Christianity. That is the new-renewed religion on which I am interested in working. □

A Discussion With Giglia Tedesco

Woman and Communist, Senator and Catholic

GIGLIA TEDESCO *is a feminist, a Communist and a practicing Roman Catholic who was elected this year to her fourth term as a member of the Italian Senate. She is vice president of the Senate and secretary of its Communist Parliamentary Caucus, a lecturer in jurisprudence and a leader of the cooperative movement and the women's movement in Italy. Fifty-three years old, she is married and the mother of two children, and is described as "warm, intelligent and outgoing." The discussion recorded below suggests how Senator Tedesco combines these roles and loyalties; it also provides insight into Catholic-Communist relationships, the progress of feminism and the alignment of political forces in Italy.*

The conversation was part of a seminar on ecumenism held at the Centro Pro Unione in Rome in May, sponsored by the Journal of Ecumenical Studies *and the religion department of Temple University in Philadelphia. Questions were put by a number of seminar participants. The discussion was transcribed and translated by Ed Grace, a Catholic theologian from the US who edits the Rome-based ecumenical newsletter* NTC News. *Leonard Swidler, editor of the* Journal, *presided over the seminar and edited the transcript, which has been slightly abridged for presentation here.*

Question: Could you explain to us the position of the Italian Communist Party (PCI) with respect to women?

SENATOR TEDESCO: Naturally the PCI position is inseparable from the general situation of women in Italy; it is likewise inseparable from the encounter with the other Italian political forces.

Without attempting to go into historical detail, I will recall that immediately after the Second World War the cultural, social and legislative situation of women in Italy was relatively backward. This backward situation existed even before the Fascist period, but under Fascism the situation further deteriorated—for example, a law was passed stating that women could no longer teach in high schools or universities. Those who were there already could remain but no others could enter.

A rupture with this past situation came about through the participation of women in the struggle of the liberation movement. Naturally the women were a minority, even if a rather substantial minority in some sectors of Italy. Women organized themselves in specifically women's units, in "Groups For the Defense of Women and For Assistance To Combatants."

After liberation, we still faced a backward situation but with new possibilities and new elements of energy. In fact, the new Constitution, which was hammered out in 1946 and 1947, guaranteed complete equality between men and women. This was possible because of a coalition between the left forces and the progressive sector of the Christian Democrats. There was a long battle in the Assembly to have equality between spouses written into the legal code. The clerical right wing was opposed, but it is very significant that one of the men who fought for it was the Christian Democratic leader Aldo Moro.

Did the PCI position on women at that time have any particular theoretical characteristics different from other Communist parties?

It was in this period that we began to elaborate a theoretical position on women, and Palmiro Togliatti [then party secretary, died 1964] was a big help. Incidentally, it was right at this same moment that many members of the "Catholic Communist Movement," of which I was a member, joined the PCI.

Togliatti affirmed that the social or political backwardness of Italian women was not because of their religious faith or religious sentiments. On the contrary! Togliatti pointed out that in the history of Italy, those women who had some importance in Italian society were not just

A Discussion With [illegible]

Humanist and Communist, Senator and Catholic

[illegible]

to hire herself a gigolo. The most oafish cluck the radio executives can find, with a voice like a damp pillow—a mother-lover of the most degraded sort—is given to America as the ideal young husband. His wife, with a tin voice and a heart of corrosive sublimate, alternately stands at his side to abet some spiritual swindle or leaves him with a rival for as much time as is needed to titillate mom without scaring her.

The radio is mom's final tool, for it stamps everybody who listens with the matriarchal brand—its superstitions, prejudices, devotional rules, taboos, musts, and all other qualifications needful to its maintenance. Just as Goebbels has revealed what can be done with such a mass-stamping of the public psyche in his nation, so our land is a living representation of the same fact worked out in matriarchal sentimentality, goo, slop, hidden cruelty, and the foreshadow of national death.

That alone is sinister enough, but the process is still more vicious, because it fills in every crack and cranny of mom's time and mind—and pop's also, since he has long ago yielded the dial-privilege to his female; so that a whole nation of people lives in eternal fugue and never has to deal for one second with itself or its own problems. Any interior sign of worry, wonder, speculation, anxiety, apprehension—or even a stirring of an enfeebled will to plan sanely—can be annihilated by an electric click whereby the populace puts itself in the place, the untenable place—of somebody called Myrt, for Christ's sake—and never has even to try to *be* itself alone in the presence of this real world.

This is Nirvana at last. It is also entropy. For here the spirit of man, absorbed, disoriented, confused, identified with ten thousand spurious personalities and motives, has utterly lost itself. By this means is man altogether lost. The radio, in very truth, sells soap. We could confine it to music, intelligent discourse, and news—all other uses being dangerous—but mom will not let us. Rather than study herself and her environment with the necessary honesty, she will fight for this poisoned syrup to the last. Rather than take up her democratic responsibility in this mighty and tottering republic, she will bring it crashing down simply to maintain to the final rumble of ruin her personal feudalism. Once, sentimentalism was piecework, or cost the price of a movie or a book; now it is mass produced and not merely free, but almost compulsory.

I give you mom. I give you the destroying mother. I give you her justice—from which we have never removed the eye bandage. I give you the angel—and point to the sword in her hand. I give you death—the hundred million deaths that are muttered under Yggdrasill's ash. I give you Medusa and Stheno and Euryale. I give you the harpies and the witches, and the Fates. I give you the woman in pants, and the new religion: she-popery. I give you Pandora. I give you Proserpine, the Queen of Hell. The five-and-ten-cent-store Lilith, the mother of Cain, the black widow who is poisonous and eats her mate, and I designate at the bottom of your program the grand finale of all the soap operas: the mother of America's Cinderella.

We must face the dynasty of the dames at once, deprive them of our pocketbooks when they waste the substance in them, and take back our dreams which, without the perfidious materialism of mom, were shaping up a new and braver world. We must drive roads to Rio and to Moscow and stop spending all our strength in the manufacture of girdles: it is time that mom's sag became known to the desperate public; we must plunge into our psyches and find out there, each for each, scientifically, about immortality and miracles. To do such deeds, we will first have to make the conquest of momism, which grew up from male default.

Our society is too much an institution built to appease the rapacity of loving mothers. If that condition is an ineluctable experiment of nature, then we are the victims of a failure. But I do not think it is. Even while the regiments spell out "mom" on the parade grounds, I think mom's grip can be broken by private integrity. Even though, indeed, it is the moms who have made this war.

For, when the young men come back from the war, what then will they feel concerning mom and her works?[2]

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2. The young men never did come back from the war.

They came back—but the war went on.

This, mom decided was intolerable, and millions supported that repugnance. When some of the boys went forth anew to fight, the moms and the mom-pinioned pops soon tore the government apart to get a truce that brought not one day of peace.

So the young men and the moms and pops decided that they had not been fighting for freedom, after all, or against tyrants, after all.

They decided they had been fighting, all that while, for security. They had fought, not to save liberty, but for hot dogs, the corner drugstore, the right to throw pop bottles at the umpire—and the girl next door, mom briefly disguised as Cinderella.

They have it all, now.

Except Security.

For that, too, they accepted a counterfeit: secrecy. But not one secret remained undiscovered by the enemy. (The measures of security are—so predictably!—specious.)

Years passed. The young men and the moms and the pops grow ever more fervent in their trust of security-through-secrecy. The ship of state settles slowly and they bail with sieves, saying, "See? We float still."

The enemy explodes uranium, plutonium, hydrogen; still they absurdly cry, "Keep these things forever an American secret—for security's sweet sake. Peace, peace, peace!"

A great victory—for momish "thinking." For "love." The boys are indeed—home.

But where's man's freedom?

PAUL ON WOMEN: A RADICAL/CONSERVATIVE ALTERNATIVE

Much has been written and said lately about Paul's attitude towards women. Various approaches have been made to the subject by people on all points of the theological spectrum. I wish to offer this article as an alternative to understanding Paul from a conservative theological position.

I should probably begin by defining the term conservative. I use this term because I am approaching Pauline writing accepting true Pauline authorship of all the epistles in the Bible commonly attributed to Paul with the exception of the Epistle to the Hebrews. The other major consideration is that I believe that all of these writings are inspired and therefore not contradictory, and are authoritative for the Christian church of all times.

To understand Paul's writings we must have some understanding of the person of Paul, the people to whom he wrote, and the times in which he wrote. We must remember that Paul was a well educated Jew who was raised in the strictest of the Pharisaical traditions. He was converted to Christianity by a startling encounter with Christ on the road to Damascus. After some years of Preparation, he then set out on several missionary journeys to proclaim this revolutionary new gospel of Jesus Christ. In the process he established Christian communities and churches all over the known world, and was dogged every step of the way by his persecutors and those who tried to cause the demise of this new religious cult

known as the Nazarenes or the Christians. After establishing a working church in an area and then moving on to other fields, others would move in trying to undo the work he had labored to begin. His epistles to these churches were his efforts to keep them from falling apart under religious and civil persecution which they faced.

Paul's chief motivation was the need to spread the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ (Philippians 2:19-30). All other considerations were subservient to that primary goal. Paul used whatever means and methods he could to get that news out: missionary journeys, debates with philosophers, preaching on a river bank, teaching in Jewish temples, preaching to his prison captors, setting up church in his prison confinement, writing letters, etc.

Paul was ministering the gospel during a period of increasing government persecution under the Caesars. (He was executed during the reign of Caesar Nero.) One of the laws of the Roman Empire made it illegal to introduce new religions in various parts of the Empire, yet Paul had no hesitation in preaching throughout the Empire. The Caesar was the absolute law of the Empire, and had all kinds of forces to ensure that absolute reign. Therefore any action which violated the laws or established customs of any area of the Empire could be punished severely by Caesar. The Empire was shaky and nearing its dissolution through uprisings and later invasions from

outsiders. Therefore, to ensure the loyalty of his far-flung subjects, the Caesar tried to prevent any radical changes in local customs which might trigger rebellion.

In response to this condition, Paul was very staunch in his position of not trying to draw any additional governmental attention to the radical concepts of the Christian Gospel. His feeling was that the good news of salvation in Christ was revolutionary enough to invite government censure for introducing a new religion contrary to the laws of Rome. He therefore made it a point to preach and teach the need to accept the governmental dictates in every other area, so that this new gospel would have a chance to survive and grow. Romans 13 is his teaching on this subject most fully developed. To balance this written word, we must, however, look at his own actions.

Although it was illegal to introduce new religions, Paul spent his entire later life doing just that. We are reminded of the words of Peter in Acts 5:29, where he in essence says that although obedience to the law of the government is important, if there is a conflict between the laws of government and the dictates of a Christian conscience, one's conscience must prevail.

Paul's prophetic inspiration led him to capsulize the ultimate of Christian reality in Galatians 3:28, where he states, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor

free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus," KJV. However, his deep concern to prevent as much controversy, and therefore governmental attempts at extinction of this gospel, led Paul to be a realist. Instead of preaching the freedom for slaves, he urges acceptance of the governmental status quo for slavery (Ephesians 6:5; I Timothy 6:1-2, etc.). However, in his own quiet way, Paul encourages individual attention to the goals of ultimate Christian reality as expressed in Galatians 3:28. Thus we have the Epistle to Philemon, where Paul does not advocate the overthrow of the law, but urges individual action which would accomplish the Christian ideal without legal confrontation.

In the same way he deals with that part of the ultimate Christian reality which makes women and men no different in status or responsibility. His public statements were aimed at proving he was not a rebel to the law, and urged his Christian converts not to openly rebel against the law of the land which demanded a secondary, subservient position for women (I Timothy 2:1-2, 9-12; Titus 2:3-5; Ephesians 5:22-33; Colossians 3:18). However, he approaches the subject on an individual level in quite a different way.

He recognizes and commends the leadership and work done by women in the various churches:

Phoebe--diakonos (deacon): Romans 16:1

prostatis (chief officer): Romans 16:2

Priscilla--host of the Ephesian church: I Corinthians 16:19

host of the Roman church: Romans 16:5

sunergos (co-worker): Romans 16:3

Apphia--host of Colossian church: Philemon 2

Nympha--host of Laodicean church: Colossians 4:15

Junia--apostle: Romans 16:7

Mary--worker: Romans 16:6

Tryphena--worker: Romans 16:12

Tryphosa--worker: Romans 16:12

Persis--worker: Romans 16:12

Euodia--co-worker: Philippians 4:2-3

Syntyche--co-worker: Philippians 4:2-3

Chloe--Paul's contact for reporting the welfare of the Corinthian church: I Corinthians 1:11

He even gives the qualifications for deacons to both men and women (I Timothy 3: 8-13). Verse 11 should properly be translated, "In like manner, women should be grave, etc." Paul is here recognizing that women serve as deacons, and need to have similar qualities as the male deacons.

Before we begin a specific study of the Pauline references to the woman's station in the church, a word study is in order on the Greek verb HUPOTASSO, translated in English as "to subject." This is a compound word made up of the simple verb TASSO, which means to put or place, and the preposition HUPO, which means under. When combined we come up with a

verb meaning to place under, hence to subject. However a study of the way Paul uses this word is interesting.

Although Paul uses HUPOTASSO in its primary sense of subjection in some cases (e.g. Romans 13:1,5), he also uses it in a much warmer, mutual sense as well, probably more accurately expressed in English as respect or attachment (e.g. E Corinthians 16:16; Ephesians 5:21). This word, HUPOTASSO, is used in all of the Pauline passages dealing with women and their relationship to their husbands. It is true that the law of the land required subjection of a wife to her husband, and Paul would be cautious in advocating the overthrow of the civil law. But Paul used the word in his own context when writing to his churches, that is with a much more mutual, respectful sense. For instance, Ephesians 5:21 enjoins all the church members to HUPOTASSO themselves to each of the others (who is subject to whom?). Then he goes right on to say that wives should HUPOTASSO their husbands in verse 24. In other words, Paul was careful to stay within the law, but encouraged a more mutual, cooperative leadership program between the sexes, than was common at that time. (Note: in verse 22 there is no verb in the Greek.)

In the Ephesians passage, Paul moves right on into his discussion of the so-called hierarchy: Christ-church=husband-wife. It is interesting to note that he is even here careful to mention the other side of the coin: responsibility and love.

But this particular hierarchy is better spelled out in his first Epistle to the Corinthians 11:3:

God

Christ

man

woman

Now if we can determine in what way God is the head of Christ, we may more fully understand how man is the head of the woman. Paul's teachings seem to indicate clearly that Christ is God, and we should see no distinction between the two concepts (Colossians 2:9). Yet on a human level of understanding, Christ derives his authority from God (Colossians 1:19). Now for the parallel, Paul says there is no distinction between man and woman (Galatians 3:28). Yet on an earthly level, custom and law provide for a woman's status or position to derive from the man's. Again we see Paul's hesitance to make the gospel so radical that it would be exposed clearly as subversive to the civil authorities. Yet he believed that in its pure form it was very radical. So he allowed for, and recommended that we go slow in changing civil situations, still believing they should be changed, and trying to accomplish that change in his personal interactions.

In reference to the passage in Ephesians 5:22-33, we see that in addition to telling wives to behave in the same manner as everyone in the church (HUPOTASSO, viz. 5:21), Paul goes

on to say that as Christ and the church are all part of the same body, so husbands and wives are one (verse 31). This begins to remind us of Paul's real goal: equality in Christ between the sexes (Galatians 3:28). We must remember how radical a concept this was in a culture where women were not much more than the personal property of their husbands.

In the I Timothy passage (2:9-15), unfortunately the only verses that are well remembered are verses 11-12: "Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. I permit not a woman to teach, nor usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence," KJV. But we need to look at the whole book to find the context of these remarks. First of all, Paul was his usual cautious self in seeming to cause radical civil changes. In fact he prefaces his remarks about women with a prayer that the civil leaders will allow the Christians to live in peace (2:2). If Paul allowed his churches to seem to flaunt the civil customs by having women as leaders, the churches would draw even more persecution than they already had (5:14). In addition, there was apparently already a great deal of trouble with some of the women in the church at Ephesus where Timothy was bishop (5:15). However, Paul was not saying that they should not participate in worship, or even pray in the services. After instructing the men how to pray, he says the women should "in like manner" pray (verse 9). Their learning should be receptive and with all due respect and attachment to the teachers.

Verses 13-15 have caused a lot of discussion for years. Adam was first formed and one would therefore think that his longer intimate contact with God would make him more loyal to God's instructions. However, although Eve was deceived into transgression, Adam chose to transgress. Now I leave it to the reader to decide which is the most severe transgression: choice or being tricked into it. The Greek verb SOTHESETAI shows no gender, and so I would translate it, "he shall be saved through her bearing of children, if they both continue in faith, love, and holiness with sobriety," 2:15). Again this shows the interdependence of men and women, but with the man being the chief transgressor, and dependent upon the woman to bring the Savior into the world.

Probably the most interesting of Paul's letters, and perhaps the one where his personality shows through most clearly, is I Corinthians. Paul had spent a year and a half in Corinth and was quite familiar with the people and their tendencies. He had become especially good friends with Chloe, and she became his contact person in Corinth for news of how they were doing. I Corinthians is written as a result of the problems he learned of through Chloe (1:11).

He begins his letter by tearing into the people of the church in Corinth on several issues: divisions in the church (1); false wisdom (2); lack of spiritual growth (3); judgmentalism (4); immorality (5-7); lack of sensitivity (8); lack of respect

for God's ministers (9); and mistreatment of communion (10). Then he begins chapter 11 with the sarcastic comment, "I praise you . . . that you . . . keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you," (11:2, KJV). In the following verses he puts forth what he has heard from Chloe that they were teaching: the Hebrew customs and theology of women. The Hebrew theology states that since man is the image of God, and woman the image of man, the women are secondary and must cover their heads in the presence of the temple officers (angels). But Paul counters this theology with his remark: "Nevertheless, neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man by the woman," (v. 11-12). Now his sarcasm shows again: "Judge for yourselves . . . does not even nature itself teach you that if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?" (v. 13-14). Paul and several of the Corinthians had themselves taken Nazarite vows on occasion, which included the provision that the men under such a vow should not cut their hair. If it was so important for women to have long hair (covered heads), then it was equally important for men to have short hair. And this was contrary to their practice and devotion to God while engaged in a Nazarite vow. Thus Paul was using sarcasm and logic to show how ridiculous their teaching about women really was. He concludes with the statement that if anyone continued to cause problems in this area, that person was out of line with the customs of all Christian churches (verse 16).

In chapter 14 we read in verse 31 that everyone is to be allowed to prophesy one by one. But Paul points out that the Corinthians were forbidding their women to speak in church (v.34-35). Again his sarcasm shows when he says, "What, do you have a corner on the truth of God? If anyone claims to be spiritual let that one prove it by being in conformity with what I have taught: let everyone covet the gift of prophecy and don't forbid anyone from speaking in tongues."

I realize that the verbs in verses 34 and 35 are in the imperative, but so is the one in verse 38. This is one of the peculiar uses of the imperative in Greek: stating an existing condition, which in these cases should not be. (Verse 38: If anyone is ignorant, (s)he really is ignorant; but this should not be the case.)

Paul was a practical Christian. His first goal was to introduce Christ to the world. Any other consideration took second place. Although he really believed in the revolutionary gospel (and did what he could to bring it to fruition), if it jeopardized his preaching Christ, it could be soft-pedalled to accomplish the initial evangelization. Although we may criticize his handling of the women's issues from a 20th century perspective, we find ourselves doing the same thing with other issues today.

Although we believe that gay man and lesbians have just as

much right to worship as straights, we are not openly advertising MCC behind the iron curtain. Instead we are encouraging underground churches. Although we preach equality of black and white brothers and sisters, we are not openly publicizing our mixed meetings in South Africa, but are utilizing an underground church. Are we not as guilty as Paul for using his same approach?

FEMALE SEXUALITY SEMINAR

1. Adams, Elsie and Mary Louise Briscoe: Up Against the Wall, Mother... Glencoe, Bev. Hills, 1971 (Particularly the excert from The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm).

2. Brownmiller, Susan: Men, Women and Rape. Bantam, N.Y. 1975.

3. Covina, Gina and Laurel Galana: The Lesbian Reader, Amazon, Oakland, 1975.

4. Dodson, Betty: Liberating Masturbation, (Available from Betty Dodson, P.O. Box 1933, N.Y. 10001 - $3.50).

5. Friedan, Betty: The Feminine Mystique, Norton, N.Y. 1974.

6. Hite, Shere: The Hite Report, MacMillan, N.Y. 1976.

7. Marti, Del and Phyllis Lyon: Lesbian Love and Liberation. Multi-Media Center, 1525 Franklin Street, San Francisco, 94109 - $1.95).

8. Mickley, Richard: Christian Sexuality, Fellowship Press, Los Angeles, 1975.

9. Nelson, James B.: Embodiment: An Approach to Sexuality and Christian Theology. Augsberg, Minneapolis, 1978.

10. Nomadic Sisters Collective: Loving Women. P.O. Box 793, Sonora Calif. 95370 - $3.50) (Probably the best of its kind.)

11. Richardson, Herbert: Nun, Witch and Playmate: The Americanization of Sex. Harper and Row, 1971. (Excellent chapter on communalization of sex.)

12. Sisley, Emily and Bertha Harris: The Joy of Lesbian Sex. Simon and Schuster, N.Y. 1977. (The text is for women, the pictures are for men, and it's a cooptation.)

13. Vida, Ginny: Our Right to Love. National Gay Task Force. New York, 1976. (If you don't own a copy now, shame on you!)

14. Wittig, Monique: The Lesbian Body. Peter Owen, London, 1975.

15. Wolff, Charlotte: Love Between Women, Harper Colophon, N.Y. 1971.

16. Kiss Daddy Goodnight. (A study of women's reactions to incestuous relationships with their fathers.)

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Values of Nonsexist Therapy

1. The therapist is aware of his/her own values.
2. There are no prescribed sex role behaviors.
3. Sex role reversals in life style are not labelled pathological.
4. Marriage is not regarded as any better an outcome of therapy for a female than for a male.
5. Females are expected to be as autonomous and assertive as males; males are expected to be as expressive and tender as females.
6. Theories of behaviors based on anatomical differeces are rejected. (anatomy is not destiny.)

Values of Feminist Therapy

1. The inferior status of women is due to their having less political and economic power than men.
2. A feminist therapist does not value an upper or middle class client more than a working class client.
3. The primary source of women's pathology is social (environmental), not personal; external, not internal.
4. The focus on environmental stress as a major source of pathology is not used as an avenue of escape from individual responsibility.
5. Feminist therapy is opposed to personal adjustment to social conditions; the goal is social and political change.
6. Other women are not the enemy. (Pitting women against women shouldn't work.)
7. Men are not the enemy either.
8. Women must be politically and economically autonomous.
9. Relationships of friendship, love, marriage should be equal in personal power.
10. Major differences between "appropriate" sex role behaviors must disappear.

from Psychotherapy for Women: Treatment Towards Equality, E Rawlings and Dianne Carter, e Ill:Chas. Thomas, 1977, p. 49

Assorted references for further reading.....

Books: Half the Human Experience-J. Hyde and B. Rosenberg (STH lib. HQ1
*Psychotherapy for Women, Rawlings and Carter (see above)
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Doherty,M. "Sexual Bias in Personality Theory" Counseling Psych L

Testing is not to be done by Feminist therapists, because tests are sex role stereotyped.

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Edson, C. "Male and Female Cheated He Them: An Encounter of Sex-Role Stereotypes in CPE" in J. of Pastoral Care 27(1973)3:158-171.
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Kelly, J et. al. "New Formulations of Sex Roles and Androgyny" J. C and Cl Psychol. 45(1977)1101-1115.
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other books

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Psychoanalytic View of Woman

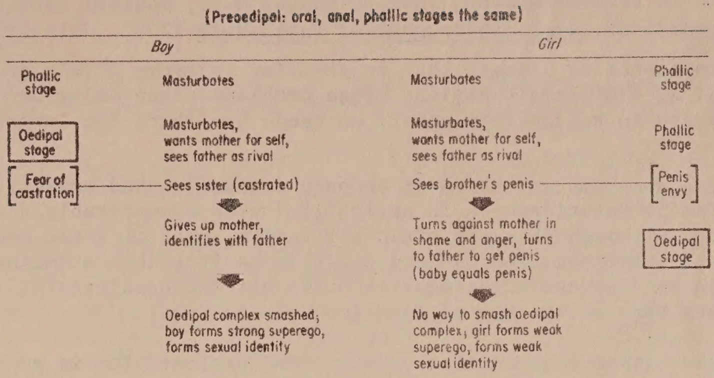

Figure 4.1 Freud's View of Male and Female Development

Horney/Thompson: womb envy!

Quotable quotes......

Freud in a letter to Karl Abraham - July 1925

"I have written a few short papers, but they are not meant very seriously. Perhaps if I am willing to admit their parentage, I shall tell you about them later." (This after writing "some Psychical Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction Between the Sexes". Daughter, Anna, presented it for Freud at the 1925 Psychoanalytic Congress in Homberg in September.)

from "Femininity"

We speak of a person, whether male or female, as behaving in a masculine way in one connection and in a feminine way in another. But you will soon perceive that this is only giving way to anatomy and convention. You cannot give the concepts masculine and feminine any new connotation. The distinction is not a psychological one; when you say masculine, you usually mean active and when you say feminine, you usually mean passive. The male sex-cell is actively mobile and searches out the female one, the latter, the ovum, is immobile and waits passively. This behavior of the elementary sexual organisms is indeed a model for the conduct of the sexual individuals during intercourse.

That is all that I had to say to you about feminity. It is certainly incomplete and fragmentary and does not always sound friendly. But do not forget that I have been describing women in so far as their nature is determined by their sexual function. It is true that that influence extends very far; but we do not overlook the fact that an individual women may be a human being in other respects as well. If you want to know more about feminity, enquire from your own experiences of life, or turn to the poets, or wait until science can give you deeper and more coherent information.

Taken from <u>Women and Analysis</u>, Jean Strouse, pps. 75-

Excerpts from "The Intractable Female Patient" John H. Houck, M.D., Medical Director of the Institute for Living, Hartford, CN. American Journal of Psychiatry 129:1, July 1972, p.59-63.

"Intractability" is an aspect of disease that is familiar to every physician. It describes particularly well a special kind of female patient whose problems often bring her into the psychiatric hospital and whose intractability someti es keeps her there far longer than anyone had anticipated.

The primary presenting problems are those of chronic depression and anxiety...The patient history reveals impaired family relationships in early life, with considerable disinterest and little consistent affection. Although they are often attractive, most of these women are socially awkward, sexually naive, and inhibited..The husband tends to be like the father: passive, variably indulgent, and easily dominated. Sexual adjustment is difficult and unsatisfying, and childrearing is often the ultimate stress that brings the patient into the hospital.

Such a woman is nearly always seen initially as a "good" patient. She is young, intelligent, articulate, psychiatrically sophisticated, and well motivated. The mere fact of hospitalization, with its release from home, family, and social pressures, produces rapid improvement.

The patient's course in the hospital begins auspiciously. A strongly dependent, positive relationship with the therapist develops very quickly, and the patient gives every indication of complete dedication to the therapeutic task...But soon less comfortable developments follow. There is a sharp recurrence of depression and/or anxiety without obvious cause, and the anger that Grinker and associates describe as the central affective theme in such patients. Directly and indirectly the patient challenges the therapist to alleviate her internal distress....The therapist gradually assumes a firmer posture with clear behavioral limits and is gratified to find that this does achieve the desired effect. The patient becomes penitent, her hostility disappears, and the depression improves.

..Common themes emerge. She is immature, anxious and angry, usually aloof and contemptuous of oth r women, and demanding and suspicious of men. In the treatment relationship she yearns for dominance and affection while exerting all her considerable guile to undercut the therapist's dominance and affection.

What is needed most is an early recognition of certain critical realities. The patient's hospital stay must be comparatively brief, her therapy supportive and aggressively reality oriented, and her attention firmly fixed on home, family and adult obligations.

There must be early and aggressive efforts to work with the spouse. The husband needs enormous amount of support because he is obligated to modify lifelong attitudes of passivity and diffidence and to assume a posture of strength and resolution - especially towards his wife. As his newly discovered strength pleases her, she will also try to demolish it.

At some point in the usual course of events, it may become necessary to decide that no further hospital admission will be permitted because the secondary gain is too great. If such a decision is made, it must be precisely outlined with the patient well in advance. And when she tests the limits of firmness of spouse and therapist - as she will often need to do - the line must be held. There is an additional bonus in holding the line. The patient brings most of her pressure upon her husband, and half-consciously she views the issue as a major test of his new found ability to take control. She will test him to the limit, but if he passes the test she is reassured and comforted. She will keep trying, but she is often aware, at last, that she really hopes she will not win.

JC FYI Marge

Marge - Seems to me some people are assholes and some of these assholes have secretaries. Some secretaries can refuse tasks, if they want to; have security. Some bosses are also "in prison" & less flexibility. I hope this description of office life does not apply to OEH. Joann

A Pink-Collar Worker's Blues

MY TURN/KAREN KENYON

More and more women every day are going out to work. A myth has grown around them: the myth of the "new woman." It celebrates the woman executive. It defines her look (a suit), and her drink (Dewar's or perhaps a fine white wine). It puts her "in charge." But it neglects to say whom she is in charge of—probably some other women.

The world still needs helpers, secretaries and waitresses, and the sad truth is that mostly women fill these serving roles. Today more women hold clerical jobs than ever before (4 million in 1950 and 20 million in 1981). Wherever we look, we see the image of the successful woman executive but, in fact, most women are going out to become secretaries. The current totals: 3 million women in management and 20 million clerical employees. So for the majority of working women—the so-called "pink-collar workers"—liberation from home is no liberation at all.

Recently I took a job as a part-time secretary in a department office of a university. I thought the financial security would be nice (writers never have this) and I needed the sense of community a job can bring. I found there is indeed a sense of community among secretaries. It is, in fact, essential to their emotional survival.

Human Beings: I felt a bit like the author of "Black Like Me," a Caucasian who had his skin darkened by dye and went into the South, where he experienced what it was like to be black. Here I was, "a person," disguised as "a secretary." This move from being a newly published author to being a secretary made it very clear to me that the same people who are regarded as creative human beings in one role will be demeaned and ignored in another.

I was asked one day to make some Xerox invitations to a party, then told I could keep one (not exactly a cordial invitation, I thought). The next day I was asked, "Are you coming to the party?" I brightened and said, "Well, maybe I will." I was then told, "Well, then, would you pick up the pizza and we'll reimburse you."

A friend of mine who is an "administrative assistant" told me about a campus party she attended. She was engaged in a lively, interesting conversation with a faculty wife. The wife then asked my friend, "Are you teaching here?" When my friend replied, "Well, no, actually I'm a secretary," the other woman's jaw dropped. She then said, "Don't worry. Nobody will ever guess."

I heard secretaries making "grateful" remarks like, "They really treat us like human beings here." To be grateful for bottom-line treatment was, I felt, a sorry comment.

> *We think we have freed our slaves, but we have not. We just call them by a different name—secretary.*

We think we have freed our slaves, but we have not. We just call them by a different name. Every time people reach a certain status in life they seem to take pride in the fact that they now have a secretary.

It is a fact that it has to be written very carefully into a job description just what a secretary's duties are, or she will be told to clean off the desk, pick up cleaning and the like. Women in these jobs are often seen as surrogate wives, mothers and servants—even to other women.

Many times, when a secretary makes creative contributions she is not given her due. The work is changed slightly by the person in charge, who takes the credit. Most secretaries live in an area between being too assertive and being too passive. Often a secretary feels she has to think twice before stepping in and correcting the grammar, even when she knows her "superior" can't frame a good sentence.

Envy: When after three months I announced to my co-workers that I was quitting, I was met with kind goodbyes. In some I caught a glimpse of perhaps a gentle envy, not filled with vindictiveness at all, but tinged with some remorse. "I'm just a little jealous that someone is getting out of prison," admitted one woman. "I wish I'd done that years ago," said another.

Their faces remain in my heart. They stand for all the people locked into jobs because they need the money, because they don't know where else to go, afraid there's no place else, because they don't have the confidence or feel they have the chance to do anything else.

I was lucky. I escaped before lethargy or repressed anger or extreme eagerness to please took over. Before I was drawn over the line, seduced by the daily rewards of talk over coffee, exchanged recipes, the photos of family members thumbtacked to the wall near the desk, the occasional lunches to mark birthdays and departures.

I am free now, but so many others are trapped in their carpeted, respectable prisons. The new-woman myth notwithstanding, the true tale of the woman on her own most often ends that way.

As I see it, the slave mentality is alive and well. It manicures its nails. It walks in little pumps on tiny cat feet. It's there every time a secretary says, "Yes, I'll do that. I don't mind" or finds ashtrays for the people who come to talk to someone else. The secretary has often forgotten her own dream. She is too busy helping others to realize theirs.

Kenyon, the author of "Sunshower," is working on a second book.

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Studies of the role of women in early Christianity generally conclude that women were marginal figures in the early Christian movement. Our sources scarcely mention women and refer to them only in passing. They do no more than transmit the names of some early Christian women; providing very little information about them. If we assume that these sources are objective reports of the crucial events and leading persons in early Christianity, we would have to conclude that this scanty information reflects the actual role women held in the early Christian church.

Academic and popular discussions of discipleship, church order, worship or mission have generally taken for granted that the early Christian communities had an all-male leadership. Scholars have believed that the structures of the early Christian communities reflected the structures and values of contemporary patriarchal Jewish or Greco-Roman society. Thus, by definition, women would have been relegated to marginal roles in early Christianity. This reconstruction of early church history from the point of view of male dominance functions today as a social and theological mythology that determines our self-understanding and justifies the present ecclesial structures of male power.[1] New analyses of the social world of early Christianity which show it, not as a

culturally well-adapted, monolithic group, but as an egalitarian, countercultural, multifaceted movement suggest an alternative view.[2] This view becomes clear when all the early sources, apocryphal and heterodox as well as canonical and orthodox, are examined. Membership in this egalitarian, pluriform movement was not defined by gender roles, but by faith commitment to the Christian community. Women, in this egalitarian movement, were not marginal figures but exercised responsible leadership.

During the early missionary period, leadership roles were diversified and based on actual function and service. Gradually these became institutionalized, and a patriarchalization of the Christian community, offices and theology took place, as the early Christians adopted the institutional forms of the surrounding patriarchal culture. Charismatic leadership rooted in the experience of and in the obedience to the Spirit was gradually replaced by patriarchal office[3] and cultic ministry.[4] This development was not the same in all places, but followed different patterns in various Christian groups. The patriarchal line of early Christian development played down women's role or made it marginal. But the earlier countercultural and later extraecclesial groups accepted women as equal members with equal responsibility and leadership.[5]

The earliest Christians understood themselves as freed by the Spirit to a new life of egalitarian discipleship. This theological understanding is expressed in the pre-Pauline baptismal formula (Galatians 3:27ff.).[6] Newly baptized Christians affirmed that in this new community there was no longer any distinction between Jew and Gentile, free and slave, male and female, but that all were united in Christ Jesus. It was a commonplace among Jews as well as Greeks to be thankful that they were humans and not beasts, Greeks and not barbarians, Jews and not Gentiles, free-born and not slaves, men and not women. The Christian egalitarian creed was formulated over and against this commonly accepted ratification of social discrimination in Judaism and Hellenism.

This confrontation of the Christian affirmation with those of the surrounding cultures shows that the new vision of community was not just a heavenly ideal, but was accepted as a historical reality. Over against the patriarchal pattern of the "world," Christians understood themselves as a new community, in which all members shared equally in the freedom of the children of God[7] and in which privileged religious, class and gender roles were abolished. The patriarchal cultural paradigm was replaced by the vision of a community where people lived together in love and service.[8] Not only Gentiles and slaves but also women could be full and equal members of this community.

*Women as Founders and Leaders of Congregations**

Historians of early Christianity generally fail to notice the important role women played in founding and promoting house churches. Since the house church was a decisive factor in early Christian development,[9] it provided the leadership and determined the form of church life. In the house church the early Christians celebrated the Eucharist (Acts 2:46; 20:7) and preached the Gospel (Acts 5:42). The assembly was called the "house of God," the new "temple," because the Spirit dwelt in it.[10]

Wealthy women converts (cf. Acts 17:4,12) exercised decisive influence on these gatherings. Acts 12:12 refers to a specific prayer meeting in the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark. Paul greets Apphia, "our sister," who together with Philemon and Archippus was a leader of a house church in Colossae (Philemon 2). The church in Philippi was founded with the conversion of the businesswoman Lydia from Thyatira (Acts 16:14). The author of Colossians refers to Nympha of Laodicea and the "church in her house" (Colossians 4:15). Paul twice mentions the missionary couple Prisca (Priscilla) and Aquila and "the church in their house" (1 Corinthians 16:19; Romans 16:3–5). He wrote the first letter to the Corinthians in response to a report made by slaves who belonged to the household of a woman Chloe (1 Corinthians 1:11).[11]

* Throughout the chapter, references and spellings, etc., are to and from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

We have no reason to assume that women were excluded from the leadership of the house churches or from presiding at worship. The "household codes"[12] probably are a later patriarchal reaction to this leadership of women within the house churches.[13] This assumption is supported by 1 Timothy 2, where the injunctions that women should be submissive and not teach are given in the context of regulations for worship.

Paul explicitly mentions women as his missionary co-workers. The texts give no indication that these women were dependent on or subordinate to Paul. Only five of Paul's co-workers (Erastus, Mark, Timothy, Titus and Tychicus) "stand in an explicit subordination to Paul, serving him or being subject to his instructions."[14] The most common terms, e.g., "co-worker" (Prisca), "brother/sister" (Apphia), "*diakonos*" (Phoebe), and "apostle" (Junia), are also found in reference to women. The authentic Pauline letters equate co-workers and "those who toil." In 1 Corinthians 16:16ff. Paul admonishes the addressees to be "subject to every co-worker and laborer" and to give recognition to such persons. First Thessalonians 5:12 exhorts the Thessalonian Christians "to respect those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you." Paul uses the same Greek verb, "to labor" or "to toil," not only for his own missionary evangelizing and teaching but also for that of women. In Romans 16:6,12 he commends Mary, Tryphena, Tryphosa and Persis: they have "labored" hard in the Lord.

Paul affirms that women have worked with him on an equal basis. Philippians 4:2f. explicitly states that Euodia and Syntyche have "contended" side by side with him. As in an athletic competition, these women have competed with

Paul, Clemens and the rest of Paul's co-missionaries in the cause of the Gospel. Paul considers the authority of both women in the community at Philippi so great that their dissensions might be a serious threat to the existence of this community.[15] The texts indicate that these women missionaries commanded the same authority, esteem and respect as their male co-workers in the missionary communities.

One of Paul's most prominent co-workers is Prisca,[16] together with her husband, Aquila; like Barnabas or Apollos, she worked independently of Paul and was not under his authority. Paul declares that all the churches of the Gentiles have reason to be grateful to this missionary couple. They founded and led house churches in Corinth, Ephesus and Rome (if Romans 16 is addressed to that community). First Corinthians 16:19 has greetings from Aquila and Prisca. When Paul sends greetings to the couple (Romans 16:3f.) he addresses Prisca first, indicating that she is the leading figure (cf. also 2 Timothy 4:19).

In Acts, Prisca is also mentioned first. The references to her and Aquila (Acts 18:2ff.; 18:18,26) correspond with the information of the Pauline letters. Luke shows the importance of the couple and suggests that they were well known. They were by trade tentmakers and supported their missionary endeavor through their own work, which, like Paul's, made them independent of the churches that they served. They were expelled from Rome when Claudius banished the Jews from there. In Ephesus they converted Apollos, who would become one of the leading apostles alongside Paul (18:26).[17] Since Prisca is mentioned first in Acts 18:26, it was probably she who was primarily responsible for Apollos' conversion. Under her leadership Apollos learned "the way of God more accurately." The text clearly assumes that Prisca was the catechist and teacher of Apollos.

Whereas Prisca and Aquila are not directly called apostles, another couple, Andronicus and Junia, receives this title in Romans 16:7. There is no reason to interpret the name Junia as a short form of the male name Junianus, since Junia was a well-known name for women at the time.[18] Andronicus and Junia are a missionary couple who had converted to Christianity before Paul. At the time of the writing of Romans 16, they are fellow prisoners of Paul and outstanding among the apostles. We know from 1 Corinthians 9:5 that Andronicus and Junia were not an exception, since the "other apostles" also had a "sister" with them as a "wife" (literally, a woman) on their missionary journeys. If the term "brother" denotes a particular group of missionary co-workers (cf. Philippians 4:21f.), there is no reason not to assume that these "sisters" were co-workers. Very likely many workers in the early Christian mission were couples.[19] When Paul stresses celibacy as the best precondition for missionary work (1 Corinthians 7:23ff.), he is expressing his own opinion, not the practice of the early missionary church.

Romans 16:1f. mentions another important woman, Phoebe. She receives two titles: *diakonos* of the church at Cenchreae and *prostatis* "of many and of myself as well." Exegetes have downplayed the significance of these titles when they refer to her. Wherever Paul uses the title *diakonos* for himself or another male leader, scholars translate it as "minister," "missionary" or "servant," whereas in the case of Phoebe they render it as "deaconess." After characterizing Phoebe as an "obviously well-to-do and philanthropic lady" Lietzmann goes on to say: "Even at that time there had long been women deacons in the Christian church who, when *their sex made them specially suitable*, came forward and gave signal help in caring for the poor and sick, and at the baptism of women"[20] (emphasis mine). Unconsciously Lietzmann here projects back into the first century the duties of the deaconess of a later period whose service was limited to the "ministry to women." Yet the text does not indicate any limitations of the office of Phoebe by prescribed gender roles. She is not the deacon of the "women" in the church at Cenchreae, but of the whole church.

Paul uses the term *diakonos* together with *synergos* (coworker), as can be seen in 1 Corinthians 3:5,9 and 2 Corin-

thians 6:1,4. According to 1 Corinthians 16:15 the co-workers and laborers are those who "have devoted themselves to the *diakonia* of the saints." The *diakonoi* appear to be not only itinerant missionaries but leaders in local congregations.[21] The term is used in the New Testament and also in secular sources to refer to preaching and teaching. Thus, the *diakonoi* served in a recognized official capacity as teachers and preachers in the Christian community.

The second title of Phoebe, *prostatis*, is usually translated as "helper" or "patroness," even though in the literature of the time it has the connotation of leading officer, president, governor or superintendent.[22] In 1 Thessalonians 5:12 the verb characterizes persons with authority in the community, and in 1 Timothy 3:4f. and 5:17 it designates the functions of the bishop, deacon or elder. Phoebe thus had a designated role of leadership and teaching in the community of Cenchreae. She was a person with great authority for many and for Paul himself. Like other missionaries, Phoebe received a letter of recommendation. It is possible that, as the *patrona*[23] of the church at Cenchreae, Phoebe, like other *patroni* of collegia (or clubs), traveled to Rome to defend there the interests of her community.

Paul's letters indicate that women were among the prominent and leading missionaries in the early Christian movement. They were co-workers with Paul but did not depend on him or stand under his authority. They were not excluded from any missionary function. They were preachers, teachers and leaders of the community. If we compare their ministry with those of the later deaconesses we have to stress that their ministry was not limited to the ministry to women nor to specific gender roles and functions. The prominence of women in the early Christian movement is confirmed by examining the list of names in Romans 16. Of the thirty-six persons mentioned, sixteen are women and eighteen men. The Pauline letters thus give us a glimpse of the egalitarian early Christian missionary movement.

The writings of the Pauline school, however, also transmit

the injunctions of a patriarchal reaction which, on theological grounds, decree the subordinate role of women. Whether or not Paul himself initiated this reaction is disputed.[24] Certainly, however, those who produced the justifications for the patriarchalization of Christian leadership were able to claim the authority of Paul without being challenged. Even though 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 concedes to women the gift of prophecy and liturgical functions, the passage nevertheless demands that women adapt to the role definition of their society. This demand is theologically justified by regarding the headship of God over Christ, Christ over man, and man over woman as a revealed hierarchy: God–Christ–man–woman.[25] For the sake of order the church order in 1 Corinthians 14:33b–36 forbids women to speak in the assembly and directs them to their husbands for religious instruction.[26]

The so-called household codes of the Deutero-Pauline literature uphold the patriarchal order of the family. These rules of conduct were universally accepted in Judaism and Hellenism and soon became a part of Christian theology.[27] According to them, women express and practice their Christian faith by observing the social-patriarchal order. In 1 Timothy 2:9–15 women are both commanded to keep silent and behave modestly, and explicitly forbidden to teach or to have any authority over men.[28] This ruling bases itself upon Genesis 2 and 3: Eve is second in the order of creation, and first in the order of sin. The author formulates this patriarchal theology for his community against a rival Christian group which had great success among women (2 Timothy 3:6) and probably accorded women teaching and leadership functions.[29]

The Acts of Paul and Thecla is a second-century writing devoted entirely to the story of a woman missionary.[30] In many regions this book was regarded as canonical in the first three centuries. It mentions a great number of women, besides the apostle Thecla. Thecla is converted by Paul. She takes a vow of continence and is persecuted for this by her

fiancé and her family. Condemned to death, she is saved by a miracle and goes with Paul to Antioch. A Syrian falls in love with Thecla, is rejected and takes revenge. When Thecla is condemned to fight with wild beasts, she baptizes herself in a pit full of water, whereupon, since the beasts do not harm her, she is set free. Her protectress, Tryphena, together with a part of her household, is converted to Christianity. Thecla proclaims the Word of God in the house of Tryphena, then follows Paul to Myra. After only a short while with him, she receives the commission "to teach the word of God" and goes to Iconium and from there to Seleucia, where she enlightens many with the Gospel.

Since Paul does not stand in the foreground of the narrative, the author of *The Acts of Paul and Thecla* appears to have incorporated independent traditions about Thecla. The image of the woman missionary depicted here is striking.[31] Thecla is commissioned by Paul to "go and teach the word of God." Women in Carthage at the beginning of the third century still could appeal to the apostle Thecla for women's authority to teach and to baptize.[32]

In other ways the picture of Thecla reflects typical feminine stereotypes. She falls in love with Paul, follows him and is dependent on him. On the other hand, her rejection of marriage brings her into conflict with the patriarchal values of her society. Motifs of the Hellenistic novel or romance are here taken over for missionary purposes.[33] We find the motif of "love at first sight," the separation motif, the theme of the "devoted couple," and faithfulness despite great pressures. Of course, in the Christian work the apostle and the woman are not sexual lovers but live in absolute continence.[34] Obviously these legends and stories could imagine women as preachers and missionaries only in romantic terms. Women renounce the old family and kinship ties, not for independent values of the faith but for a spiritual love relationship to the apostle. In the genre of romantic love, the woman is infatuated, follows the apostle, and remains faithful to him under the greatest pressures. Nevertheless, the picture of Thecla retains elements of the authority of early Christian women missionaries.

Women Prophets in Early Christianity

Prophets played an eminent role within the early Christian community. From the very beginning they functioned as inspired oracles of the resurrected Lord, their authority based on divine revelation communicated by the Spirit. Paul regards prophets as second only to apostles in the leadership of the church, and they were still regarded as the normative church leaders in some Christian communities in the mid-second century.[35] Paul takes for granted that women also act as prophets in the Christian assembly. He insists, however, that they do it in a proper way and do not overstep the gender differences between women and men (1 Corinthians 12:2–16).

In Luke it is declared that the Spirit is given to all Christians, to women as well as men (Acts 2:17f.).[36] In the infancy narrative Anna and Mary function as prophets.[37] He also refers to the four prophetess daughters of Philip (Acts 21:9). Eusebius tells us their fame was so great in the early church that the provinces of Asia argue for their apostolic origin by referring to the burial place of one of them in Asia Minor.[38] Papias of Hierapolis claims to have known them personally.[39]

In the second century the Montanists attempted to legitimate their prophecy by establishing a prophetic line of succession. They referred to an Asiatic prophet called Amnia, whose name was still highly respected at the end of the second century.[40] The anti-Montanist writer does not deny her prophetic ministry but claims her for the Catholics. He lists in his succession of recognized prophets Agabus, Judas, Silas, the daughters of Philip, Amnia in Philadelphia, Quadratus and some others.[41] At the beginning of the second century Justin affirms that Christian men and women

have charisms from the Spirit of God.[42] Irenaeus argued against the Alogoi, who denied the validity of prophecy, that Paul acknowledged prophetic women and men in the community.[43]

The Acts of Paul and Thecla mentions women prophets, like Theonoe, Stratonike, Eubulla, Phila, Artemilla and Numpha. At Corinth a prophet Myrta encouraged Paul and the community not to lose heart because Paul has to go to Rome. "The Spirit came upon Myrta, so that she said: . . . Paul the servant of the Lord will save many in Rome and will nourish many with the word . . . so that there will be great grace in Rome."[44] The references to the worship service show that she spoke in the Eucharistic assembly. Early Christian prophecy was liturgical prophecy. Paul's remarks in 1 Corinthians also suggest this. In the *Didache* the prophets are likened to the high priests and have the right to say the Eucharistic prayer. They are, as Spirit-filled persons, not bound to a liturgical formula, but can give thanksgiving freely as much as they want. Only if no prophets and apostles were present were the local ministers, bishops, presbyters and deacons entitled to take their place.[45] The author of the Apocalypse likewise understands himself as a prophet and insists that his "words of prophecy" be read aloud in the liturgical assembly.[46]

The author of the Apocalypse directs his criticism against a rival group of prophets (22:16). The opponents of the author seem also to have been organized in a school.[47] At the end of the first century a prophet-teacher whom the author calls "Jezebel" was the head of such a school in Thyatira. Her followers are characterized as disciples with the technical term "her children."[48] The same expression is used in 2 John 1, 4 and 13 to characterize the followers of the "elect lady" to whom the elder writes.[49] The Apocalypse characterizes "Jezebel" and her activity in language taken from the Old Testament prophets, which called the lapses of Israel into idolatry "adultery and whoredom."[50] In labeling the teacher-prophet "Jezebel" he insinuates that, like the Old

Testament queen, the prophet promoted idolatry and achieved her goals through seductive power and malevolent scheming.

The authority of this prophet and her "school," however, must have been well established in the community in which the author of the Apocalypse also had some followers (2:24). Despite the earlier warnings of John, the "school" of "Jezebel" continued to be a part of the community at Thyatira, and we can therefore assume that the school of this woman prophet was able to withstand the influence of John. Despite this attack on a particular school headed by a woman prophet, John did not discredit female prophecy as such. Asia Minor continued to recognize women as prophets even in the second and third centuries. The impact of the prophet-teacher "Jezebel" may be reflected in the fact that Thyatira later became a center of the Montanist movement, in which women prophets were prominent.[51]

Together with Montanus, Maximilla and Priscilla (or Prisca) were the leading prophets in Montanism.[52] They were not just his companions and followers, but enjoyed equal spiritual gifts and leadership in the Montanist movement. Like Montanus, the women prophets claimed that the Paraclete, or Holy Spirit, spoke directly to them, basing this claim on faith in revelations by the Holy Spirit given to women and men in prophetic ecstasy. The Montanists expected a speedy coming of the Lord and showed a passionate contempt for this world by advocating sexual asceticism, fasting, and martyrdom. The pronouncements of the first three prophets, Priscilla, Maximilla and Montanus, were written down and gathered as sacred documents similar to the words of the Old Testament prophets, the sayings of Jesus and the letters of the apostles.

The two best-known oracles of Priscilla and Maximilla are significant. When Prisca was asleep, Christ, in the form of a *female figure*, appeared to her saying that this was a holy place and here would Jerusalem descend out of heaven.[53] After the death of Montanus, Maximilla became the leader

of the movement. She was persecuted, and commissions were sent out in order to expose her as a fraud.[54] Her opponents attempted to raise doubts about the genuineness of the movement by testing her spirits. Maximilla complained bitterly: "I am pursued like a wolf out of the sheep fold; I am no wolf: I am word and spirit and power." Since the Montanist opponents could not refute the movement on doctrinal grounds, they attacked it by slandering its leading prophets. Charges of immorality and the abandonment of their husbands were brought against the women. It was claimed that Montanist leaders committed suicide and that in their mysteries they slaughtered children, whose blood was mingled in their sacrifices, a charge originally made by the pagans against all Christians.[55] Thus, despite their basic doctrinal orthodoxy, the Montanists were reviled and finally driven out of the mainstream church.[56]

The considerable literature against the Montanists focused its attack especially on the leadership of women. Since Maximilla and Priscilla were proof that the Holy Spirit spoke through the female sex, the Montanists admitted women to church "offices." Didymus maintains that the women prophets in Montanism taught and prophesied in the assembly of the community.[57] Firmilian knows of a Montanist prophetess in Asia Minor who, in A.D. 235, converted many lay people and clerics, and who also baptized and celebrated the Eucharist.[58] Montanists appealed to Galatians 3:28[59] and to the women prophets in Scripture to justify these practices. According to Origen, "those disciples of women, who chose as their master Priscilla and Maximilla, not Christ, the spouse of the Bride, appeal to the following women prophets: the daughters of Philip, Deborah, Mary the sister of Aaron, Hulda, and Anna the daughter of Panuel."[60] Origen refutes this tradition by arguing that these women prophets did not speak in public or in the assemblies.

Scriptural texts cited against the leadership of women by Church Fathers are especially 1 Corinthians 14:34f., 1 Timothy 2:12ff. and 1 Corinthians 11:3,5. The argument against

the prophetic leadership of women is summarized in the comments of Didymus the Blind on 1 Timothy 2:14:

> Scripture recognizes as prophetesses the four daughters of Philip, Deborah, Mary, the sister of Aaron, and Mary, the mother of God, who said as recorded in the Gospel: "Henceforth all *women* [emphasis mine] and all generations shall call me blessed." But in Scripture there are no books written in their name. On the contrary, the Apostle says in First Timothy: "I do not permit women to teach," and again in First Corinthians: "Every woman who prays or prophesies with uncovered head dishonors her head." He means that he does not permit a woman to write books impudently on her own authority, nor to teach in the assemblies, because by doing so, she offends her head man; for "the head of woman is man and the head of man is Christ." The reason for this silence imposed on women is obvious: woman's teaching in the beginning caused considerable havoc to the human race; for the Apostle writes: "It is not the man who deceived, but the woman."[61]

Yet the mainstream church also appealed to the women prophets of Scripture to justify the minor role which they accorded women. The *Apostolic Constitutions* of the fourth century categorically declared: "We do not permit our women to teach in the Church, but only to pray and hear those that teach," and they limit the liturgical ministry of the deaconess to the functions of keeping the doors and assisting the "presbyters in the baptism of women for reasons of decency."[62] The prayer of ordination of women to these minor roles reads:

> O Eternal God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Creator of man and woman, who replenished with the Spirit Miriam and Deborah and Anna, and Hulda; who did not disdain that Thy only begotten Son should be born of a woman; who also in the tabernacle of the testimony and in the temple, did ordain women to be keepers of Thy holy gates . . .[63]

This church order thus accepts the Montanist appeal to the women prophets of Scripture, but uses their argument to justify a secondary role for women in the church.[64]

Women and the Divine Female Principle in Gnostic Communities[65]

Despite the standard complaint of the Church Fathers that women were prominent in Gnostic groups, we have very little information about the actual status and role of women in such communities.[66] We can attempt here only a sketch of the images of male and female in Gnosticism and the roles accorded women in these groups.

Whether or not Marcion[67] be called a Gnostic is disputed. He distinguished the alien God of Goodness, the Father of Jesus Christ, from the World God of Justice, who is the antithesis of the Good God. The Demiurge, or World God, created the cosmos and humankind, but the Good God is absolutely alien to all created things. Human creatures belong bodily and psychically to the World God. Christ came to save them from the World God and to make them children of the alien Good God. Since the Marcionites rejected the created world, they were devoted to rigorous asceticism, and by protesting against flesh and matter they demonstrated that they did not owe allegiance to the World God. Because procreation strengthens the sphere of the Demiurge, they did not marry and have children.

Severus, an associate of Marcion, taught "that woman is the work of Satan. . . . Hence those who consort in marriage fulfill the work of Satan."[68] Marcionism belongs to the type of Gnosticism that starts from a dualism of two opposed principles.[69] In this system femaleness belongs to the sphere of creation, whereas maleness stands for heavenly transcendent realities. In *The Gospel of the Egyptians* a saying of the Savior is quoted: "I am come to destroy the works of the female, by the 'female' meaning lust, and by the 'works' birth and decay."[70]

The classic expression of this dualism of two opposed principles or pairs of opposites is found in terms of male and female in the Pseudo-Clementines: "The present world is female, as the mother bringing forth the souls of the children, but the world to come is male, as a father receiving his children."[71] Therefore, of the two types of prophets in the world, one type is the female, whose words accord entirely with the created world, and the other type is the male prophet who speaks for the coming, higher world.[72] In the encratite *Acts of Thomas* the "communion of the male" is a parallel expression to the "highest gift of grace," "Holy Spirit" or "the power of the Most High."[73] The categories "female and male," therefore, do not so much characterize actual women or men as denote opposite types of dualistic principles.

The Marcionites were well organized, with a hierarchy of bishops and priests. We do not know much about the actual role of women in Marcion's church, but he is said to have appointed women to all church offices on an equal basis with men.[74] A saying of *The Gospel of Thomas* about Mary Magdalene could be applied to these women. In *The Gospel of Thomas* Simon Peter demands that Mary Magdalene leave the circle of disciples, "because women are not worthy of life." Jesus responds, "See, I shall lead her, so that I make her a man. That she too may become a living spirit, who is like you men. For every woman who makes herself a man shall enter the kingdom of heaven."[75]

Apelles, another member of the school of Marcion, revised his teacher's radical dualism. He was influenced by Philumene, an ascetic virgin and prophet at Rome, who supposedly encouraged Apelles to found a new sect.[76] Tertullian therefore calls her not only prophet but also the "*praeceptrix* and *magistra*" of Apelles.[77] Philumene taught and also accompanied Apelles on his various trips, and in the commu-

nities of Apelles her writings were acknowledged as "Holy Scripture." [78]

Like the Marcionites, the Carpocratians distinguish between the unbegotten Father and the God who gave the Law.[79] Since they believe in the migration of the soul, they hold that they can be liberated from the body and from reincarnation not through asceticism but through libertinism. All things are indifferent, and nothing in the world is by nature evil. Not through obedience to laws, however, but only through faith and love are persons saved.[80] The Carpocratians appeal to Salome, Mary Magdalene and Martha as the source and guarantors of their traditions. One of their teachers, Marcellina, represented their teaching in Rome in the middle of the second century and acquired many followers there.

The son of Carpocrates, Epiphanes, taught that the "righteousness of God is communion with equality." [81] Since God provided for all beings equally, no distinction should be made between "rich and poor, people and ruler, foolish and wise, female and male, free and slave." [82] Epiphanes thus espouses the same ideal as Paul (Galatians 3:27f.), but argues the fundamental equality of all, not on the basis of baptism, but on the basis of creation. Therefore his "fellowship with equality" extends not only to gender roles in the Christian community but also to sexuality and marriage. "In that God made all things in common for man and brought together the female with the male in common and united all the animals likewise, he declared righteousness to be fellowship with equality." [83]

It was the evil Lawgiver God who introduced "mine and thine" and so promulgated private property rights and the institution of marriage. Since his law destroyed the fellowship of the Divine Law, in their liturgies the Carpocratians attempt to restore the Divine Law by uniting "as they will and with whom they will." [84] However, we do not know if this "love feast" of the Carpocratians was a ritual celebration of the basic equality between the sexes or whether they practiced intercourse indiscriminately, since the charge of fornication was a standard polemic of various religious groups against each other.[85]

Valentinianism belongs to a different type of Gnostic dualism. It holds that maleness and femaleness are not antagonistic opposites, but complementary.[86] This group places the origin of darkness, evil and dualism within the godhead itself "by means of a genealogy of personified divine states evolving from another, which describe the progressive darkening of the original Light in categories of guilt, error and failure." [87] Thus "the Valentinians did not identify the female with any absolute principle of evil, but rather with the fallible part of God, which became involved in the material world." [88] The Valentinian system begins with the Dyad Bythos=Primal Cause and Sige=Silence, who bring forth a couple, Nous and Truth. Though the primal Tetrad appears to consist of four different hypostases, Bythos and Sige as well as Nous and Truth form one single male-female substance or entity. The second Tetrad, Logos and Life and Man and Church, comes from the first Tetrad and brings forth in turn ten and twelve aeons. The ten aeons in the female series have names which allude to the union between man and woman, whereas the names of the twelve aeons in the male series recall the Christian virtues. The divine Pleroma thus consists of a series of male-female aeons. The last aeon, Sophia, plays the role of Cosmic Eve. Because of her ignorance and her desire to know the incomprehensible Father, she initiates a Fall in the Divine World that is the origin of the evil, visible world. Sophia is restored to the Pleroma, but her "abortion" cannot remain in the Pleroma. It is given form by Christ and the Holy Spirit and called Achamoth. Since Achamoth cannot enter the Pleroma, she falls into all sorts of distress. At her request the Savior, Jesus, is sent to give the "formation according to knowledge" and to release her from her passions. Achamoth can now give form to the Demiurge, who in due course fashions everything else. The Demiurge creates the human body first as incorporeal and

later puts a skin over it, but without his knowledge Achamoth introduces spiritual "seeds" in some humans. Humanity, therefore, consists of three classes of beings: the hylics, or "fleshly" ones; the psychics, who have souls; and the pneumatics, who have the spiritual seed from the Mother or Achamoth. The female and the male element were originally united. They are reunited when the female element becomes male, and are then united with the angels and enter into the Pleroma. "Therefore it is said that the woman is changed into a man and the Church here below into angels."[89] It is clear that "male and female" are not simple gender distinctions, but characterize mythological, archetypal realities.[90]

The Gnosticism of Marcus, a disciple of Valentinus, is distinguished by the fact that he places another Tetrad, called Unity, Oneness, Monad and One, before the thirty aeons. This first Tetrad is also called "the inconceivable and nonmaterial Father, who is without paternity and who is neither male nor female."[91] He claims that the "spiritual man," formed in the image and likeness of God, was masculine-feminine.[92] The Marcosians seem to have celebrated the sacraments of the "bridal chamber" and of baptism. They baptized into "the name of the unknown Father of all things, into Truth, the mother of all, into him who descended on Jesus, into union, into redemption, into the communion of the powers."[93]

The rite of the "bridal chamber" is related to the New Testament bridal and marriage imagery.[94] The celebration of the "spiritual marriage" in the Marcosian rite was a prefiguration of the perfect eschatological marriage union. At the end of the world-process, Achamoth will enter the Pleroma and receive the Savior as her bridegroom. The perfected "spiritual seed" will then be given as brides to the angels. The "spiritual marriage after the image of the unions above"[95] expresses in different terms what is meant by "becoming male." Thus the Valentinians had a very positive image of the marriage union and took it as a symbol and type

for salvation that restores the original androgynous unity of humanity. According to *The Gospel of Philip*,[96] a book which shows close affinities with the Marcosian teachings, when Eve was separated from Adam "death arose. When they reunite and he receives her to himself, death will be no more."[97] Christ came in order to remove the separation and unite the male and female.[98]

Marcus is reported to have had great success with women, which his opponents ascribed to his sorcery and love potions.[99] Yet it appears that his teaching was congenial to men as well as to women. He asked women at the Eucharistic *epiclesis* to speak the thanksgiving over the cup of mixed wine. Mixing the contents of the woman's cup with that of his own, he prayed: "May 'Grace' (*Charis*) who is before all things, who is beyond thought and description, fill thine inner being and multiply in thee her knowledge, sowing the mustard seed in good soil."[100] He understood himself to be a prophet, upon whom the first Tetrad had descended in female form,[101] and he ordained women as prophets with the following words:

> I desire to make thee a partaker of my Grace (*Charis*), since the Father of all doth continually behold thy angel before his face (Matt. 18:10). The place of thy greatness (angel) is ever in us: we must come together. First, receive from me and through me Grace. Adorn thyself as a bride who expects her bridegroom, that thou mayest be what I am, and I what thou art. Receive in thy bride-chamber the seed of light. Receive from me the bridegroom, and give him a place, and have a place in him. Behold Grace has descended upon thee; open thy mouth and prophesy.[102]

Irenaeus claims that Marcus especially deceived wealthy women of high rank in order to obtain their property and abuse them physically. Such a woman was prepared "to be united with him in everything, in order that she, with him, might enter into the One . . ."[103] It is apparent that Ire-

naeus no longer understood "the mystery of union" and the rite of the "bridal chamber" which was an "anticipation of the eschatological union between the spiritual gnostics and the angels." Such a misunderstanding was easily possible, since according to *The Gospel of Philip* the "holy kiss" was the center of the rite: "For the perfect conceive through a kiss and give birth. Because of this we also kiss another. We receive conception from the Grace (*Charis*) which is among us."[104] In the same Gospel Mary Magdalene is called the "consort of Christ" whom he loved "more than the disciples, and kissed her on her [mouth] often."[105] Since the Valentinian system knew three Christs and perceived the divine and the world in *syzygies* (couples), it is possible that Mary Magdalene was thought of as consort of the earthly Jesus, as the Holy Spirit was the consort of the aeon Christ in the Pleroma and Sophia was the consort of the Savior.

Gnosticism, we may conclude, employed the categories of "male" and "female," not to designate real women and men, but to name cosmic-religious principles or archetypes. Salvation in the radically dualistic Gnostic systems requires the annihilation and destruction of the female or the "feminine principle." In the moderately dualistic systems, salvation means the reunification of the male and female principle to an androgynous or asexual unity. In Gnosticism, the pneumatics, men and women, represent the female principle, while the male principle stands for the heavenly realm: Christ, God and the Spirit. The female principle is secondary, since it stands for the part of the divine that became involved in the created world and history. Gnostic dualism shares in the patriarchal paradigm of Western culture. It makes the first principle male and defines femaleness relative to maleness.[106] Maleness is the subject, the divine, the absolute; femaleness is the opposite or the complementary "other."[107] Gnostic dualism reflects the chasm between the world and the divine, the body and the spiritual self. We do not know whether this dualism also divided men from women and whether, in the rite of "the bridal chamber," men represented the male and women the female archetype. Since all Gnostics understand themselves as "female," it is possible that the ritual signifies overcoming this dualism for both men and women.

The Theological Justification for Rejection of Women's Leadership

Women were prominent in the church even after the middle of the second century. They participated in church leadership, not only as widows and deaconesses, but also as prophets and teachers. Women actually dared "to teach, to debate, to exorcise, to promise cures, probably even to baptize."[108] Their leadership and initiative were, however, more and more rejected by the patriarchal church: "No woman is allowed to speak in church, or even to teach, to baptize, or to discharge any man's function, much less to take upon herself the priestly office."[109]

Montanism, Gnosticism and the mainstream church all appealed to apostolic revelation and tradition to justify their own church order and theology.[110] Since the formation of the canon was still in flux,[111] certain groups considered so-called apocryphal writings as "Holy Scripture," whereas other groups rejected some of the Scriptural writings which were later acknowledged as canonical. To justify prophecy by women, the Montanists appealed to the succession of women prophets in the Scriptures, whereas some Gnostic groups rejected the Old Testament and part of our New Testament. Yet writings like *The Acts of Thecla* were long considered canonical, even by the mainstream church.

The canonical Gospels mention women, such as Mary Magdalene and Salome, as disciples of Christ. Gnostics built on these traditions to give the women disciples a special role in the reception of revelation and secret teaching. Mainstream Christianity, on the other hand, attempted to play down the significance of the women disciples and concen-

trated on figures like Peter and Paul and the Twelve. The debate between patriarchal and egalitarian Christian groups is reflected in various Gnostic texts which relate the competition between Peter and Mary Magdalene.[112]

Mary Magdalene is mentioned in all four canonical Gospels as the primary witness to the Easter faith event. She and the other women, whose names vary, were disciples of Jesus during his ministry and witnessed his death, burial and resurrection.[113] Yet Luke's Gospel already attempts to play down the role of women as proclaimers of the Easter kerygma, by stressing "that the words of the women seemed to the eleven an idle tale and they did not believe them" (Luke 24:11).[114] The motif of the apostles' skepticism toward the message of the women is even further developed in the *Epistula Apostolorum*, an apocryphal document of the second century. According to this account Mary Magdalene and Sarah (in the Coptic version it is Martha and Mary) are sent to announce to the apostles that Jesus had risen. But the apostles did not believe them. Finally, the Lord himself goes with Mary and her sisters to them, but they still do not believe. Only after they touch him do they know "that he has truly risen in the flesh."[115]

According to the *Sophia Jesu Christi*, the Redeemer appears after the resurrection to the twelve disciples and to the seven women who had followed him into Galilee.[116] Of the women disciples, only Mary Magdalene is expressly mentioned. The Redeemer teaches the male and female disciples about the "perfect one" and of "the will of the holy angels and of the Mother that the manly host may here be made perfect . . ."[117] The "manly host," in this text, are the Gnostics. Their salvation is willed by the angels, who represent the male principle in Valentinian Gnosticism. The Mother is Sophia, as can be seen in this text: "The Son of Man agreed with Sophia, his consort, and revealed himself in a [great light] as bisexual. His male nature is called the 'Savior,' the begetter of all things, but his female 'Sophia,' 'mother of all,' whom some call Pistis."[118] The conclusion is

typical of the Gnostic Gospels: "From that day on his disciples began to preach the Gospel of God, the eternal Father . . ."[119] It is apparent that women here are counted among the disciples who preach the Gospel.

Mary Magdalene, together with two other Marys, is mentioned in *The Gospel of Philip* (32) and in *The Dialogue of the Redeemer*,[120] whereas in *The Gospel of the Egyptians* Salome has a prominent role. In *The Great Questions of Mary* Christ gives revelation and secret teaching to his privileged disciple Mary Magdalene.[121] The vision reveals to Mary the prototype of the mystery rite of union practiced by various Gnostic groups. *The Gospel of Thomas* alludes to the antagonism between Peter and Mary Magdalene,[122] a theme more fully developed in the *Pistis Sophia* and in *The Gospel of Mary* (Magdalene).

In the *Pistis Sophia*[123] (third century) Mary Magdalene and John have a prominent place among the group of disciples.[124] Jesus stresses their outstanding role: "Mary Magdalene and John, the virgin,[125] will surpass all my disciples and all who shall receive mysteries in the Ineffable, they will be on my right and on my left and I am they and they are I."[126] Here we have the same formula as in the prayer of Marcus for the authority of women prophets. The other women disciples mentioned are Mary the mother of Jesus, Salome and Martha. Mary Magdalene asks most of the questions (thirty-nine out of forty-six) and plays a major role in giving interpretations. Peter's hostility toward her is apparent throughout the whole work. He objects: "My Lord, we shall not be able to endure this woman, for she takes our opportunity, and has not let any of us speak, but talks all the time herself."[127] Mary in turn complains that she hardly dares to interpret what has been said by the First Mystery. Peter intimidates her so much because "he hates the female race." Yet she is told that whoever receives gnosis and revelation is commanded to speak. It does not matter whether it is a man or a woman. The argument between Peter and Mary Magdalene clearly reflects the debate between the

mainstream church and Gnosticism on whether or not women have received apostolic revelation and are the legitimate transmitters of the apostolic tradition.

The controversy between Peter, the opponent of gnosis, and Mary Magdalene, the authority within gnosis, is even more pronounced in *The Gospel of Mary*[128] (second century). The first part of the work ends with the exhortation of the disciples by Mary Magdalene. After the departure of Jesus the disciples do not proclaim the Gospel because they fear they might suffer the same fate as did their Lord. Mary Magdalene then promises them that the Savior's "Grace" *(Charis)* will protect them and that they should not be afraid, because he has made them "to be men."

The second part begins with Peter asking Mary to share with them the revelations she has received from the Savior "who loved her above all women." But after Mary has told them of a vision, Andrew and Peter react in unbelief. Peter objects: "Did he then speak privily with a woman rather than with us and not openly? Shall we turn about and all harken to her? He has preferred her over against us?" Mary is offended by the reaction of Andrew and Peter to her revelation. She weeps and insists that she has not invented the visions and lied about the Savior. Levi comes to the defense of Mary Magdalene and rebukes Peter:

> "Peter, thou hast ever been of a hasty temper. Now I see thou dost exercise thyself against the woman like the adversaries. But if the Savior hath made her worthy, who then art thou to reject her? Certainly the Savior knows her surely enough. Therefore did he love her more than us. Let us rather be ashamed, put on the perfect Man, as he has charged us, and proclaim the Gospel . . ."[129]

This polemical dialogue reflects the opposition that Gnostics encountered when they appealed to Scriptural precedents, especially Mary Magdalene, as female transmitters and interpreters of the apostolic tradition. *The Gospel of Mary*, in turn, declares that whoever rejects the revelations and traditions transmitted under the name of a woman rejects the true revelation of the Savior himself and does not do the work of proclamation he has commanded. The followers of Andrew and Peter, who argue against the authority of women because of their contempt for "the female race," distort the true Christian message.

Various third- and fourth-century church orders reflect the patriarchal reaction against female leadership. The *Didascalia Apostolorum* maintains that women are not appointed by Jesus to teach and to proclaim Christ. The *Didascalia* does acknowledge that women were disciples and refers to three of them by the name Mary (Mary Magdalene, Mary the daughter of James, and the other Mary). The text, however, insists that the Lord "did not send them to instruct the people with us. For if it were required that women should teach, our Master Himself would have commanded these to give instruction with us."[130] The *Didascalia*, however, appeals to the women disciples when arguing for the ministry of deaconesses.

The *Apostolic Church Order* transmits a dialogue between the male and the female disciples on whether or not women can celebrate the Eucharist.[131] The dialogue is very similar to that between Peter, Andrew, Levi and Mary in *The Gospel of Mary*. Yet the tone is quite different. It is not just Peter and Andrew but also John, James and Mary herself who object to the Eucharistic ministry of women. Andrew introduces the question as to whether the apostles should organize a ministry for women. Peter acknowledges that some steps have been taken, but then poses the question of the Eucharistic ministry for women. John points out that at the Last Supper Jesus did not permit women to stand with the apostles, an argument already reflecting the priestly character of the minister of the Eucharist. (According to the New Testament Jesus "lay down at table" with his disciples.) Martha objects that this is not an argument against women, for Jesus did not let women stand beside the men because Mary

(who is early identified with Mary Magdalene) laughed. However, Mary rejects this argument of Martha. She argues against the Eucharistic ministry of women by quoting Jesus as saying, "The weak shall be saved through the strong," i.e., women through men and not vice versa. A woman herself is made to provide the theological argument against women's Eucharistic ministry.

Similarly, in *The Questions of Bartholomew*, Mary, the mother of Jesus, argues that women should pray standing behind men, because the Lord (actually Paul) said that the head of man is Christ, but the head of woman is man.[132] Later it appears that Mary herself is the sole exception to this, because she stands up and lifts up her hands in prayer to heaven.

Thus it appears that in the second and third centuries the leadership of women within the Christian community is still a very live and controversial issue.[133] Both parties, the opponents as well as the advocates of women's leadership roles, appeal to the apostolic tradition to make their point. The advocates refer to significant women, e.g., Mary Magdalene, Salome or Martha, and to passages such as Galatians 3:28 or Romans 16 to prove that Christian truth is based also on the apostolic authority of women. The patriarchal opposition cites the injunctions of 1 Corinthians 14:33b–36 and 1 Timothy 2:9–15 or the "household codes" for their view that women can occupy only subordinate positions limited to the care of women.

Those women whom the patriarchal writers could not erase from historical consciousness they declared frauds or heretics or interpreted from a patriarchal perspective. Origen, for example, acknowledges Phoebe, but reduces her to an assistant and servant of Paul and argues that women who do good works can be accepted as deaconesses.[134] Chrysostom affirms that women had leadership roles in the nascent Christian church, but maintains that only when the "angelic condition" existed could women travel in the service of the Gospel, prophesy and be called disciples or apostles.[135] But

these privileges applied solely in the primitive Christian communities.

Historical studies have demonstrated that the early Christian writers did not include all the extant materials in their writings, but selected and rewrote early Christian traditions that were important for their theological argument. Since the opponents of women's leadership in the church wrote from a patriarchal point of view, we can assume that they transmitted only a fraction of the rich traditions about significant women and their contributions in early Christianity. Most of the egalitarian traditions of primitive Christianity are probably lost. The few references to women's leadership that survived in patriarchal records are like the tip of an iceberg indicating the wealth of information that has vanished from historical consciousness.

Early Christian writings were shaped by a struggle between opposing groups over the equality of women. They cannot be taken as a complete history of the actual condition of women in the early church. The texts written to justify male leadership record the sad demise of the original Christian vision of oneness in Christ. Those that transmit remnants of the egalitarian tradition remind the mainstream church that the community founded by Jesus was meant to be one of mutual service of brother and sister, not one made in the image of the society where some "lord it over" others.

NOTES

1. Cf. the Biblical arguments of the *Declaration on the Question of the Admission of Women to the Ministerial Priesthood* and the Vatican's official press *Commentary* which were issued simultaneously by the Vatican Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (Jan. 27, 1977). For theological evaluations, cf. among others K. Rahner, "Priestertum der Frau?," *Stimmen der Zeit*, vol. CXII (1977), pp. 291–301, and J. R. Donahue, "Women, Priesthood and the Vatican," *America*, April 2, 1977, pp. 285–89, who points out: "The declaration correctly states that equality can coexist with

differentiation. But is there not a danger that differentiation may meld into discrimination when one group in the church (male ecclesiastics) tells the other group (women) exactly what their rights and roles are?" Cf. also the commentary edited by Arlene and Leonard Swidler, *Women Priests: A Catholic Commentary on the Vatican Declaration* (New York: Paulist Press, 1977). For the patriarchal stance of other Vatican documents, cf. the excellent review by Nadine Foley, "Woman in Vatican Documents, 1960 to the Present," in J. Coriden, *Sexism & Church Law: Equal Rights and Affirmative Action* (New York: Paulist Press, 1977), pp. 82–108.

2. Cf. J. G. Gager, *Kingdom and Community: The Social World of Early Christianity* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1975); G. Theissen, "Itinerant Radicalism: The Tradition of Jesus Sayings from the Perspective of the Sociology of Literature," *Radical Religion: The Bible and Liberation* (Community for Religious Research and Education, 1976), pp. 84–93; *idem*, *Soziologie der Jesus bewegung* (ThExH. 144; Munich: Kaiser, 1977); *idem*, "Soziale Schichtung in der korinthischen Gemeinde: Ein Beitrag zur Soziologie des hellenistischen Urchristentums," *Zeitschrift für Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, vol. LXV (1974), pp. 232–72; R. Scroggs, "The Earliest Christian Communities as Sectarian Movement," in J. Neusner (ed.), *Christianity, Judaism and Other Greco-Roman Cults*, vol. II (Leiden: Brill, 1975), pp. 1–23.

3. Cf. the "list of duties" for the office of bishop: he should be "one who governs his own house well and keeps his children in respectful obedience—for whoever does not know how to govern his own house, how can he take care of the church of God?" (1 Tim. 3:4–5). The patriarchal family is here the model for church structure.

4. H. v. Campenhausen, *Kirchliches Amt und geistliche Vollmacht in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1963); *idem*, "The Origins of the Idea of the Priesthood in the Early Church," in *Tradition and Life in the Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968), pp. 217–30; G. Dix, "The Ministry in the Early Church, c. A.D. 90–140," in K. Kirk (ed.), *The Apostolic Ministry* (London, 1964), pp. 183–303; J. L. Mohler, *The Origins and Evolution of the Priesthood* (New York, 1970); E. Schüssler Fiorenza, *Priester für Gott* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1972); A. E. Carr, "The Church in Process: Engendering the Future," in A. M. Gardiner (ed.), *Women and Catholic Priesthood: An Expanded Vision* (New York: Paulist Press, 1976), pp. 66–88, and the excellent research review by A. Lemaire, "The Ministries in the New Testament: Recent Research," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 3 (1973), pp. 133–66.

5. For a fuller development of this perspective, cf. my articles "Die Rolle der Frau in der urchristlichen Bewegung," *Concilium*, vol. VII (1976), pp. 3–9; "Interpreting Patriarchal Traditions," in L. Russell (ed.), *The Liberating Word: A Guide to Nonsexist Interpretation of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976), pp. 39–61; and "The Study of Women in Early Christianity. Some Methodological Considerations" (forthcoming).

6. Cf. R. Scroggs, "Paul and the Eschatological Woman: Revisited," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, vol. XLII (1974), p. 536; W. A. Meeks, "The Image of the Androgyne," *History of Religion*, vol. XIII (1974), pp. 165–208; H. D. Betz, "Spirit, Freedom and Law: Paul's Message to the Galatian Churches," *Svensk Exeg. Arsbok*, vol. XXXIX (1974), pp. 145–60; M. Bouttier, "Complexio Oppositorum: Sur les Formules de I Cor xii.13; Gal iii.26–8; Col iii.10, 11," *New Testament Studies*, vol. XXIII (1976), pp. 1–19.

7. R. Scroggs, "Paul and the Eschatological Woman," *loc. cit.*, has suggested that the opponents of Paul held that the baptismal formula eliminated the distinctions between the sexes, whereas Paul wants to eliminate the inequality between the sexes but not the distinctions (cf. 1 Cor. 7 and 11). However, Gal. 3:27f. does not eliminate sexual distinctions on the basis of creation, but eliminates specific gender roles within the community. Therefore it is not likely that the text is to be understood within the context of the Gnostic myth of the reunification of male and female, since "male and female" are here clearly parallel expressions to "Jew and Greek," "slave and free"; i.e., social relationships are meant. As the elimination of the societal religious distinctions between Jew and Greek becomes reality within the community of the baptized and is not just an eschatological hope, so is the elimination of specific gender roles a reality in the Christian community. Gal. 3:27f. therefore does not mean an eschatological utopian or an individualized and spiritualized Gnostic declaration but speaks about relationships within the Christian community.

8. For the connection of the *diakonein* motif with the Eucha-

ristic tablefellowship, cf. W. Brandt, *Dienst und Dienen im Neuen Testament* (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1931), p. 69; J. Roloff, "Die Deutung des Todes Jesu," *New Testament Studies*, vol. XIX (1972), pp. 38–64, 51–62.

9. F. V. Filson, "The Significance of the Early House Churches," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. LVIII (1939), pp. 105–12.

10. B. Gärtner, *The Temple and Community in Qumran and in the New Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1965); R. J. M. Kelvey, *The New Temple: The Church in the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1969); and my article "Cultic Language in Qumran and in the New Testament," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, vol. XXXVIII (1976), pp. 159–77.

11. Cf., however, the derogatory remark of W. A. Meeks (ed.), *The Writings of St. Paul* (New York: Norton, 1972), p. 23: "It is a response to reports which have come to Paul by . . . *gossip* from 'Chloe's people' (1:11), otherwise unknown" (emphasis mine).

12. Cf. J. E. Crouch, *The Origin and Intention of the Colossian Haustafel* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972); D. Balch, *"Let wives be submissive . . .": The Origin, Form and Apologetic Function of the Household Duty Code in 1 Peter* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Microfilm, 1974).

13. G. Theissen, "Itinerant Radicalism . . . ," *loc. cit.*, p. 91, has suggested that the urban Hellenistic congregations "represented a family-style love-patriarchalism, in which the social distinctions survived in a softened, milder form. Characteristic of this ethos were the early Christian instructions to household members . . ." Cf. also his "Soziale Schichtung in der korinthischen Gemeinde," *Zeitschrift für Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* vol. LXV (1974), pp. 232–72. However, Gal. 3:28 and the leadership of women in early Christian house churches speaks against such a "love-patriarchalism" in the earliest missionary communities.

14. Cf. E. E. Ellis, "Paul and His Co-Workers," *New Testament Studies*, vol. XVII (1970–71), pp. 437–52, especially 439.

15. Cf. W. E. Thomas, "The Place of Women in the Church at Philippi, *Expository Times*, vol. LXXXIII (1972), pp. 117–20; cf. also R. W. Graham, "Women in the Pauline Churches: A Review Article," *Lexington Theological Quarterly*, vol. XI (1976), pp. 25–33, especially 29f.

16. Cf. A. Harnack, "Probabilia über die Addresse und den Verfasser des Hebräerbriefes," *Zeitschrift für Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, vol. I (1900), pp. 16–41, especially 33ff.

17. The writer of *Codex Bezae* (D) (parchment manuscript of the fifth/sixth centuries which probably represents a second-century text) places the name of Priscilla (Prisca) in second place in Acts 18:26. He not only makes Aquila the subject of the sentence in 18:2 by writing "Aquila with his wife Priscilla," but also plays down the leadership of Priscilla insofar as he mentions Aquila three times in Acts 18 (3, 7, 22) without referring to Priscilla. On the whole, Codex D has a tendency to minimize the references to women in Acts. In Acts 1:14 he adds "children" and thus makes the women disciples into wives of the apostles. In Acts 17:34 he omits "and a woman by the name of Damatis," and in 17:12 he writes "men and women" instead of "women and men." Cf. E. J. Epp, *The Theological Tendency of Codex Bezae Cantabrigensis in Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1966), pp. 74f.

18. Cf. M. J. Lagrange, *Saint Paul: Épitre aux Romains* (Paris, 1916), p. 366. Some manuscripts read "Julia."

19. See my forthcoming articles "The Twelve" and "The Apostleship of Women in Early Christianity," in Arlene and Leonard Swidler (eds.), *Women Priests*, pp. 114–22 and 135–40. Cf. B. Bauer, "Uxores Circumducere (1 Kor 9:5)," *Biblische Zeitschrift*, vol. III (1959), pp. 94–102. Cf. also the interpretation of Clement of Alexandria, who likens their missionary ministry to that of the deaconess and limits it to women: ". . . and took their wives with them, not as women with whom they had marriage relations, but as sisters, that they might be their fellow ministers [*syndiakonous*] in dealing with housewives. It was through them that the Lord's teaching penetrated also the women's quarters without any scandal being aroused" (Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis*, III, 6:53,3f.). Clement understands "sister" here in an encratite sense, even though the text does not give any indication of encratite tendencies, since "brother" never has encratite overtones.

20. H. Lietzmann, *The History of the Early Church*, vol. I (London: Lutterworth Press, 1963), p. 146. For a similar patriarchal interpretation, cf. E. A. Judge, "St. Paul and Classical Society," *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*, vol. XV (1972), p. 28: "The status of women who patronized St. Paul would particularly repay attention. They are clearly persons of some independence and

eminence in their own circles, *used to entertaining and running their salons*, if that is what Paul's meetings were, as they saw best" (emphasis mine).

21. K. H. Schelkle, "Ministry and Ministers in the New Testament Church," *Concilium*, vol. XI (1969), pp. 5–11; A. Lemaire, "From Services to Ministries: Diakonia in the First Two Centuries," *Concilium*, vol. XIV (1972), pp. 35–49; J. Gnilka, *Der Philipperbrief* (Freiburg: Herder, 1968), pp. 35f.

22. The verb as well as the substantive "have the twofold sense of leadership and care." In the First Epistle of Clement of Rome, 36:1; 61:3 the substantive is used with reference to Christ, the High Priest. (B. Reicke, "*prohistemi*," *TDNT*, vol. VI, p. 703.)

23. Cf. "Patronage and Patronus," in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), pp. 790f.

24. The judgment depends on the decision whether or not 1 Cor. 11:2–16 is genuine Pauline. Cf. W. Munro, "Patriarchy and Charismatic Community in 'Paul,' " in Plaskow and Romero, *Women and Religion*, 2nd ed. (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1974), pp. 189–98; W. O. Walker, "1 Cor. 11:2–16 and Paul's View of Women," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. XCIV (1975), pp. 94–110, and the rejection of his attempt to declare 1 Cor. 11:2–16 as non-Pauline by J. Murphy-O'Connor, "The Non-Pauline Character of 1 Corinthians 11:2–16?," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. XCV (1976), pp. 615–21.

25. Almost all contributions that discuss the role of women in the New Testament grapple with this text. Cf. S. Lösch, "Christliche Frauen in Korinth," *Theologische Quartalschrift*, vol. CXXVII (1974), pp. 216–61; G. H. Gilbert, "Women in the Churches of Paul," *Biblical World*, vol. II (1893), pp. 38–47; E. Kähler, *Die Frau in den Paulinischen Briefen* (Zurich: Gotthelf, 1960); M. D. Hooker, "Authority on Her Head: An Examination of 1 Cor. 11:10," *New Testament Studies*, vol. X (1963–64), pp. 410–16; G. B. Caird, "Paul and Women's Liberty," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, vol. LIV (1972), pp. 268–81; W. J. Martin, "I Corinthians 11:2–16: An Interpretation," in Gasque and Martin (eds.), *Apostolic History and the Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), pp. 231–41; R. Scroggs, "Paul and the Eschatological Woman," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, vol. XL (1972), pp. 283–303; J. B. Hurley, "Did Paul Require Veils or the Silence of Women? A Consideration of 1 Cor. 11:2–16 and 1 Cor. 14:33b–36," *Westminster Theological Journal*, vol. XXXV (1972–73), pp. 190–220; A. Feuillet, "La Dignité et le rôle de la femme d'après quelques textes Pauliniens," *New Testament Studies*, vol. XXI (1975), pp. 157–91 (for an English abstract of this article, cf. "Is Paul anti-feminist?," *Theology Digest*, vol. XXIV [1975], pp. 29–35); A. Joubert, "Le Voile des femmes," *New Testament Studies*, vol. XVIII (1972), pp. 422–24; J. Galot, *Mission et ministère de la femme* (Paris: 1973), pp. 123ff.; V. Ramsay Mollenkott, *Women, Men and the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1977).

26. Cf. G. Fitzer, *Das Weib schweige in der Gemeinde: Über den unpaulinischen Charakter der mulier taceat Verse in 1 Kor. 14* (Munich: Kaiser, 1963). Cf. also H. Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), pp. 246f.; S. Aalen, "A Rabbinic Formula in 1 Cor. 14:34," in F. L. Cross (ed.), *Studia Theologica, II, 1* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1964), pp. 513–25; G. Dautzenberg, *Urchristliche Prophetie* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1975), pp. 257–73.

27. For the literature on the topic, cf. E. Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), pp. 154–63, and the notes above.

28. Cf. Dibelius and Conzelmann, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972), pp. 44–49 (literature); R. Falconer, "1 Timothy 2:14–15: Interpretative Notes," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. LX (1949), pp. 375–79.

29. Cf. Dibelius and Conzelmann, pp. 65ff. and 116, on the "false Teachers" of the Pastoral Epistles; R. J. Karris, "The Background and Significance of the Polemic of the Pastoral Epistles," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. XCII (1973), pp. 549–64.

30. C. Schlau, *Die Akten des Paulus und der Thekla* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1877); Hennecke and Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, vol. II (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1965), pp. 322–90, especially 353–64; E. Hazelton Haight, *More Essays on Greek Romances* (New York: Longdon, 1945), pp. 48–65.

31. Cf. Hennecke and Schneemelcher, pp. 331ff.

32. Tertullian, *De Baptismo*, 17: "But if certain Acts of Paul, which are falsely so named, claim the example of Thecla for allowing women to teach and to baptize, let men know that in Asia the presbyter who compiled that document, thinking to add of his own to Paul's reputation, was found out and though he professed he had done it for love of Paul was deposed from his position. How

could we believe that Paul should give a female power to teach and to baptize when he did not allow a woman even to learn in her own right? 'Let them keep silence,' he says, 'and ask their husbands at home.' "

33. Cf. M. Braun, *History and Romance in Greco-Roman Literature* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1938); P. J. Achtemeier, "Jesus and the Disciples as Miracle Workers in the Apocryphal New Testament," in E. Schüssler Fiorenza (ed.), *Aspects of Religious Propaganda in Judaism and Early Christianity* (Notre Dame University Press, 1976), pp. 149–86, especially 162ff.

34. R. Söder, *Die apokryphen Apostelgeschichten und die romanhafte Literatur der Antike* (1932; repr. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1969), pp. 119–47; Sr. M. R. Nugent, *Portrait of the Consecrated Woman in Greek Christian Literature of the First Four Centuries* (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1941), pp. 77–78, 81ff.

35. Cf. E. Cothenet, "Prophétisme et ministère d'après le Nouveau Testament," *La Maison Dieu*, vol. CVII (1971), pp. 29–50; cf. also the literature and research review in G. Dautzenberg, *Urchristliche Prophetie*, pp. 15–42.

36. For Luke's redaction of the Joel material in Acts 2:17–21, cf. R. F. Zehnle, *Peter's Pentecost Discourse* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1971), pp. 28–34, 125ff.

37. This motif was further developed in the patristic period. Cf. A. Grillmeier, "Maria Prophetin," *Revue des Études Augustiniennes*, vol. XI (1956), pp. 295–312.

38. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, III, 31.

39. *Ibid.*, 39.

40. Cf. L. Zscharnack, *Der Dienst der Frau in den ersten Jahrhunderten der christlichen Kirche* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1902), pp. 179–90.

41. Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.*, V, 17.

42. Justin, *Dialogus*, c, Tryph. 88.

43. Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, III, 11.

44. Hennecke and Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, vol. II, pp. 379f.

45. *Didache*, 10:7; 13:3; 15:1f.

46. M. E. Boring, "The Apocalypse as Christian Prophecy: A Discussion of the Issues Raised by the Book of Revelation for the Study of Early Christian Prophecy," *SBL Seminar Papers*, vol. II (Cambridge: Society of Biblical Literature, 1974), pp. 43–62.

47. It is generally assumed that the followers of "Jezebel" are identical with the Nicolaitans (Apoc. 2:2–7) and with "those who hold the teaching of Balaam" (2:14). Yet it is not clear what their relationship to the later Gnostic group of the Nicolaitans was. Cf. my article "Apocalyptic and Gnosis in the Book of Revelation and Paul," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. 92 (1973), pp. 565–81.

48. Cf. my article "The Quest for the Johannine School: The Apocalypse and the Fourth Gospel," *New Testament Studies*, vol. XXIV (1977), pp. 402–27, for the literature on the "school" question.

49. Most exegetes understand the address "elect lady" as a circumlocution for "church." However, the similarity in wording in Apoc. 2:20 and 2 John 1 suggests that the "elect lady" is the head of the community as "Jezebel" is the prophet-leader in the Apocalypse.

50. Cf. the excellent article by K. Thraede, "Frau," in *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, vol. VIII (Stuttgart, 1973), pp. 197–269, especially 254–66.

51. Epiphanius, *Haereses*, LI, 3.

52. Cf. H. Kraft, "Die altchristliche Prophetie und die Entstehung des Montanismus," *Theologische Zeitschrift*, vol. XI (1955), pp. 249–71; P. de Labriolle, *La Crise montaniste: Les Sources de l'histoire du montanisme* (Paris, 1913); *idem*, " 'Mulieres in Ecclesia taceant': Un Aspect de la lutte anti-montaniste," *Bulletin d'ancienne littérature et d'archéologie chrétiennes*, vol. I (1911), pp. 1–24, 103–22.

53. Epiphanius, *Haer.*; XLVIII, 1:3; XLVIII, 14:1.

54. Cf. H. Lietzmann, *History of the Early Church*, vol. I, pp. 200f.

55. Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.*, 16, 17. Cf. J. Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*, vol. I (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1971), pp. 105ff. But compare the severe judgment of Montanism by R. A. Knox, *Enthusiasm: A Chapter in the History of Religions* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950), p. 49: "The history of Montanism is not to be read as that of a great spiritual revival, maligned by its enemies.

It is that of a naked fanaticism, which tried to stampede the Church into greater severity . . ."

56. Cf. L. Zscharnack, *Der Dienst der Frau*, pp. 184ff.
57. Didymus the Blind, *On the Trinity*, III, 41:3.
58. Cyprian, *Epistolae* 75:10.
59. Epiphanius, *Haer.*, XLIX, 2.
60. Origen, *Fragment on 1 Cor.* 74.
61. Didymus, *On the Trinity*, III, 41:3.
62. *Apostolic Constitutions*, III, 6:1–23.
63. *Ibid.*, II, 58:4–6.
64. For an excellent review of church development in the question of women's ministry, cf. R. Gryson, *The Ministry of Women in the Early Church* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1976).
65. In the following section the English quotations of the texts are from W. Förster, *Gnosis: A Selection of Gnostic Texts*, vol. I, Engl. transl. ed. by R. McL. Wilson (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972).
66. K. Thraede ("Frau," *loc. cit.*, p. 237) maintains that Gnostic movements were known for the great participation of women in them. He suggests that the Gnostic dualism of "male and female" developed in reaction to the actual leadership of women in Gnosticism.
67. The standard work on Marcion is still A. v. Harnack, *Marcion: Das Evangelium vom fremden Gott* (1924; repr. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1960).
68. Epiphanius, *Panarion*, XLV, 2:1.
69. Cf. H. Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion: The Message of the Alien God and the Beginnings of Christianity*, 2nd enl. ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963), pp. 236f.; R. A. Baer, *Philo's Use of the Categories Male and Female* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), pp. 65–80.
70. Hennecke and Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, vol. I, pp. 166f.
71. Pseudo-Clementines, *Homilies*, II, 15:3.
72. Cf. G. Strecker, *Das Judenchristentum in den Pseudoklementinen* (Göttingen, 1958), pp. 35–96; J. Jervell, *Imago Dei: Gn 1, 26f. im Spätjudentum, in der Gnosis und in den Paulinischen Briefen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960), pp. 163f.
73. *Acts of Thomas*, 27.
74. Cf. L. Zscharnack, *Der Dienst der Frau*, pp. 156–79, especially 174f.
75. *Gospel of Thomas*, Log. 114. Cf. B. Gärtner, *The Theology of the Gospel of Thomas* (London: Collins, 1961), p.253: "In the Gnostic systems the man–woman relationship is motivated basically by the structure of the heavenly world, the male and female powers which are striving after unity."

76. Tertullian, *De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 6:6; 30:6; Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.*, IV, 13:2.
77. Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem*, III, 11.
78. Tertullian, *De Praescr. Haer.*, 30:6.
79. Cf. W. Förster, *Gnosis*, pp. 34–37; H. Kraft, "Gab es einen Gnostiker Karpokrates?," *Theologische Zeitschrift*, vol. VIII (1952), pp. 434–43.
80. Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.*, I, 25:1–6.
81. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis*, II, 2, no.6.
82. *Ibid.*, no.6:1.
83. *Ibid.*, no.8:1.
84. *Ibid.*, no.10:1.
85. These accusations were made by pagans and Jews against the Christians in general, by mainstream Christianity against Montanist and Gnostic groups and vice versa, but also by various Gnostic groups against each other. Cf. R. Haardt, *Gnosis: Character and Testimony* (Leiden: Brill, 1971), p. 69 fn. 1.
86. Simonianism also belongs to this type. For the Helene/Ennoia figure, cf. the analyses of K. Beyschlag, *Simon Magus und die christliche Gnosis* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1974), pp. 134–64; G. Lüdemann, *Untersuchungen zur simonianischen Gnosis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975), pp. 55–81.
87. H. Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion*, p. 237.
88. R. A. Baer, *Philo's Use of . . . Male and Female*, p. 71.
89. Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.*, I, 23:3.
90. For the affinity of the Jungian system to the male-female principles of this second type of Gnostic dualism, cf. R. M. Stein, "Liberating the Feminine," in R. Tiffany Barnhouse and U. T. Holmes (eds.), *Male and Female* (New York: Seabury Press, 1976), pp. 76–86, and A. Belford Ulanov, "Jung on Male and Female," *ibid.*, pp. 197–210. Cf. also the feminist theological evaluation of this dualism by R. Radford Ruether, *New Woman, New Earth: Sexist Ideologies and Human Liberation* (New York: Seabury, 1975), pp. 151–59.
91. Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.*, I, 14:1.
92. Gn. 1:27; Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.*, I, 18:2.

93. Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.*, I, 23:3.
94. R. M. Grant, "The Mystery of Marriage in the Gospel of Philip," *Vigiliae Christianae*, vol. XV (1961), pp. 129–40.
95. Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.*, I, 21:3.
96. R. McL. Wilson, *The Gospel of Philip* (London: Mowbray, 1962); cf. also W. A. Meeks, "The Image of the Androgyne," *loc. cit.*, pp. 191–95.
97. Wilson, *Gospel of Philip*, 71.
98. *Ibid.*, 78.
99. Even L. Zscharnack, *Der Dienst der Frau*, pp. 171ff., repeats the judgment of Irenaeus that Marcus was a "sorcerer."
100. Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.*, I, 13:2.
101. *Ibid.*, 14:1.
102. *Ibid.*, 13:3.
103. *Ibid.*, 13:4.
104. Wilson, *Gospel of Philip*, 31.
105. *Ibid.*, 32, 35.
106. This is in my opinion overlooked by E. H. Pagels, "What Became of God the Mother? Conflicting Images of God in Early Christianity," *Signs*, vol. II (1976), pp. 293–303.
107. For the definition of woman as "other," cf. the classic work of S. de Beauvior, *The Second Sex* (New York: Knopf, 1953).
108. Tertullian, *De Praescr. Haer.*, XLI.
109. Tertullian, *De Virginibus Velandis*, IX. Cf. Ch. Stücklin, *Tertullian, De virginibus velandis* (Bern: H. Lang, 1974), pp. 189–203.
110. Cf. J. Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition*, vol. I, p. 109.
111. For the history of the formation of the canon, cf. the *Introductions to the New Testament*.
112. Cf. P. Perkins, "Peter in Gnostic Revelation," in *Proceedings of SBL: 1974 Seminar Papers*, vol. II (Washington: SBL, 1974), pp. 1–13, especially 1f.
113. Cf. M. Hengel, "Maria Magdalena und die Frauen als Zeugen," in Betz, Hengel and Schmid (eds.), *Abraham unser Vater* (Leiden: Brill, 1963), pp. 243–56, and my article "Mary Magdalene: Apostle to the Apostles," *UTS Journal*, April 1975, pp. 22ff.; U. Holzmeister, "Die Magdalenenfrage in der kirchlichen Überlieferung," *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie*, vol. XLVI (1922), pp. 402–22, 556–84.

114. C. F. Parvey, "The Theology and Leadership of Women in the New Testament," in R. R. Ruether (ed.), *Religion and Sexism* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974), pp. 117–49, attempts a short description of the passages on women in Luke and Acts but does not give a critical evaluation of Luke's theological tendencies.
115. Hennecke and Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, vol. I, pp. 195ff.
116. *Ibid.*, pp. 243–48.
117. *Papyrus Berolinensis*, 124:9f.
118. *Coptic Gnostic Library*, Codex I, 106:16–23. Cf. Hennecke and Schneemelcher, vol. I, p. 251.
119. *Papyrus Ber.*, 127:16.
120. Hennecke and Schneemelcher, vol. I, pp. 248ff.
121. *Ibid.*, p. 339; Epiphanius, *Panarion*, XXVI, 8:2–3.
122. *Gospel of Thomas*, Log. 114.
123. C. Schmidt, *Koptisch-Gnostische Schriften*, vol. I, *bearb.* W. Till (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1954); Hennecke and Schneemelcher, vol. I, pp. 250–59.
124. For the special role of Mary Magdalene and "John"(?) in the Fourth Gospel, cf. R. E. Brown, "Roles of Women in the Fourth Gospel," *Theological Studies*, vol. XXXVI (1975), pp. 688–99, and the popular account of S. M. Schneiders, "Apostleship of Women in John's Gospel," *Catholic Charismatic*, vol. I (1977), pp. 16–20. In the Fourth Gospel we also find a certain tension between Mary Magdalene and Peter or the Beloved Disciple and Peter.
125. For the theological understanding of "becoming a virgin" in Philo and in Gnosticism, cf. R. A. Baer, *Philo's Use of . . . Male and Female*, p. 75.
126. Chap. 96; cf. Schmidt and Till, *Koptisch-Gnostische Schriften*, vol. I, pp. 148.25ff.
127. Chap. 36; also chap. 72; see Schmidt and Till, 36.3–25 and 104.17–39.
128. Published in W. C. Till, *Die gnostischen Schriften des koptischen Papyrus Berolinensis* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1955), pp. 68–72; Hennecke and Schneemelcher, vol. I, pp. 340–44.
129. *Papyrus Ber.*, 18:1–21.
130. *Didascalia*, III, 6:2. Cf. R. H. Connolly, *Didascalia Apostolorum: The Syriac Version* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1929), p. 133. Also III, 6:1–2. Cf. F. X. Funk, *Didascalia et constitutiones*

Apostolorum (1905; repr. Turin, 1964), pp. 191, 8–18; transl. *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Buffalo: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885–96), vol. VII, p. 427.

131. *The Ecclesiastical Canons of the Apostles*, 24:1–28; English transl., J. P. Arendzen, "An Entire Syriac Text of the Apostolic Church Order," *Journal of Theological Studies*, vol. III (1902), p. 71.

132. Hennecke and Schneemelcher, vol. I, pp. 492f.

133. Cf. A. v. Harnack, *Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries*, vol. II (New York: Putnam, 1908), p. 64. He argues, however, that the opposition to Gnosticism and Montanism led in the church to the exclusion of women. In a similar fashion argues F. Heiler, *Die Frau in den Religionen der Menschheit* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1977), pp. 115f. Cf. also my article "Feminist Theology as a Critical Theology of Liberation," *Theological Studies*, vol. XXXVI (1975), pp. 605–26.

134. *Commentary on Romans*, 10:17 (PG 14, 1278A-C).

135. E. A. Clark, "Sexual Politics in the Writings of John Chrysostom," *Anglican Theological Review*, vol. LIX (1977), pp. 3–20, especially 15f.; D. F. Winslow, "Priesthood and Sexuality in the Post-Nicene Fathers," *The Saint Luke's Journal of Theology*, vol. XVIII (1975), pp. 214–27, argues that the Fathers took the incarnation seriously insofar as they were concerned with the whole person of Christ. However, they did not perceive that "sexuality was an integral part of the whole person. It follows that to deny the full participation in the life of the church to some persons (women) is to deny the reality of their full baptism into the one fully human articulation of God in Jesus Christ, as well as to deny the full 'assumption' of humanity of the incarnate Word" (p. 226).

TWO

Mothers of the Church: Ascetic Women in the Late Patristic Age

ROSEMARY RUETHER

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Dear Sisters & Brothers:

It is time again for our annual celebration of World Church Extension.

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This year we have a very streamlined "program" (to save on overhead, so that monies collected can be used for programs). We are sending you a letter from Elder Jean White, outlining all the work that World Church Extension is involved in. Along with that, we are enclosing a single Business Reply Envelope. Please read this letter in your Sunday Service, and take a love offering for the work that must go on. Enclose the offering--in a single check from your Church or in checks from individuals--in the envelope and mail it to us at Fellowship Headquarters.

Also, if you choose, you may designate your offerings, or portions of your offerings, into the following categories: (Return the form below with your offering).

- -

CHURCH NAME & CITY: ______________________________

Our offering is in the amount of $__________ and is designated for:

______ The World Church Extension Office in London

______ Outreach in Western Europe and New Zealand

______ The Mexico City Church's Building Fund

______ Hispanic Americas Ministry

______ Translation of Materials

______ Nigerian Emergency Relief

______ Please keep us informed about progress in World Church Extension--especially in the area we designated.

FEBRUARY

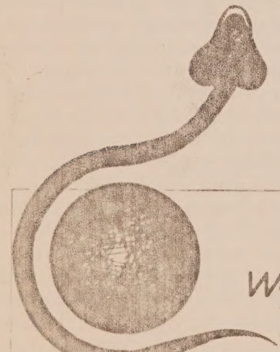
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			CRIBE SUBSCRIBE SUI SUBSCRIBE SUBSCRIBI CRIBE SUBSCRIBE SUI SUBSCRIBE SUBSCRIBI CRIBE JOURNEY SUI SUBSCRIBE SUBSCRIBI CRIBE SUBSCRIBE SUI SUBSCRIBE SUBSCRIBI CRIBE SUBSCRIBE SUI		1	2
3	4 Samaritan College Spring Term Begins	5	6	7 First Church Started In Mexico, 1981	8	9 Northeast District Board of Home Missions, New York
10 World Church Extension Day	11 Fellowship and District Tithes Due *District Coordinators Reports Due*	12 Lincoln's Birthday	13	14 ♡Valentine's Day	15	16
17	18 Washington's Birthday (Observed)	19	20 + Ash Wednesday	21	22	23
24	25 ←	26 District Coordinators and Board of Elders Meeting	27	28 →		

THE GAY CHRISTIAN

A journal of theological reflection from Metropolitan Community Church

KAREN ZIEGLER

CREATION MYTHS: BRIDGE TO HUMAN WHOLENESS



We experience our lives in the form of narrative. When we are very young, we hear stories which tell us about the nature of the reality into which we have been born. We form a sense of self and an understanding of our relationship to the world through these stories. In North America, the stories of Adam and Eve, Dick and Jane, the Pilgrims, the Indians, God, Jesus, and George Washington are among those which shape our sense of history and determine the human beings we become. When we are old enough to begin to tell our own stories (and this begins quite early), they are shaped by the worldview we have learned through the narratives we have heard or experienced. Because they are so fundamental, I begin and end this paper with stories.....

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and *my* mythology. My friend said, "Well, take yourself seriously. Do it." So I did. It still amazes me that I needed someone to tell me that. Question: What story did I hear as a girl-child that told me that women ever take themselves seriously and have something to say?

The word 'myth' carries a great deal of excess baggage in our culture. It has the connotation of "untrue" or "unreal", and this gives us license to think that we do not have to take anything which is labeled "myth" seriously. Mircea Eliade, in writing about the function of myth, talks about "archaic" or "primative" societies. Again, this gets us "off the hook"; we do not have to acknowlege that myth serves us in precisely the same way.

i

Last spring I went to Philadelphia to debate Madeline Murray O'Hare, the atheist crusader responsible for taking prayer out of public schools. Ms. O'Hare is a radical feminist; she is very articulate about the (very true) fact that the Judeo-Christian religious tradition has helped to cause and reinforce women's oppression. The debate, held at the Philadelphia Gay Community Center, was most interesting, and I was of course in sympathy with many of her arguments.

Somehow, we got on the subject of homosexuality. Jay Deacon, the other panelist, and I sensed her homophobia and probed her to find its cause. She became so flustered that she began to tell us, in a very loud voice, that in Genesis God created Adam and Eve, and "therefore a man cleaves to his wife . . ."

Madeline Murray O'Hare, the radical feminist atheist, resorted to the myth of the fall when all else failed.

ii

Last month I complained to a friend about writing this paper. I could not, it seemed, find anything to write about which related to me enough to get sufficiently motivated. I was overwhelmed by my sense of exclusion, as a woman, from the entire Judeo-Christian tradition. I ranted and raved about how the Genesis creation accounts were totally absurd and destructive, how I hated them, and how I wanted to write about *my* anger, *my* theories,

For this reason, I prefer not to call the creation accounts of Genesis 1-3 "myths", even though they fit all general descriptions of myth. I find a more helpful model in Stephen Crites' excellent article "The Narrative Quality of Experience". According to Crites, religion consists of fundamental stories which create a sense of self and world for an individual or a group of people. These stories orient people to the "great powers" that shape the reality of their world. They reveal the kind of drama people are engaged in, and become the paradigms out of which people act.

Crites makes a distinction between "sacred stories" and "mundane stories". Sacred stories are stories which are too deeply embedded within us to be fully articulated. We can manipulate mundane stories by telling them in different ways, but sacred stories can change only very gradually.

> *People do not sit down on a cool afternoon and think themselves up a sacred story. They awaken to a sacred story, and their most significant mundane stories are told in the effort, never fully successful, to articulate it. For the sacred story does not transpire within a conscious world. It forms the very consciousness that projects a total world horizon, and therefore informs the intentions by which actions are projected into that world."*[2]

If we cannot set out to articulate the sacred story of our culture, we at least can pinpoint some fundamental elements of that story and describe how various mundane stories create and support this particular world-view. Our culture as a whole believes that there is one particular sex (male) and race (white) which is superior. Our culture is very nervous about sexuality and devalues the body. Hence we find in Genesis a male god creating the world *ex nihilo* by the "word" instead of by the "body". We find this god producing light and pronouncing it good. Woman is created for the use of man, and can be interpreted as the originator of evil. Heterosexual monogamous relationships are explained and sanctified. No other sexual relationships are given this sanction. I would suggest that the Genesis creation accounts articulate as clearly as any mundane story can the sacred story of our culture.

We live in a time in history when this sacred story is shifting. The "Death of God" movement in theology exposed the fact that we no longer can believe in a god who is both all-"good" and all-"powerful". The god-in-the-sky who manipulates our reality as though we were so many marionettes on strings is dead. The civil rights movement confronted white people with the depth and cruelty of our institutional and personal racism. The feminist and gay movements exposed the bankruptcy of the mind-body dualism which still pervades our culture. In short, we have found out what our sacred story is, and we have found that it is built on the relationship of oppressor to oppressed. It makes human wholeness virtually impossible.

To accomodate a shift in sacred story, all mundane stories come to be seen in a new light. They need to be told in a new way.

> *A conversion or a social revolution that actually transforms consciousness requires a traumatic change in a woman's story. The stories within which she has awakened to consciousness must be undermined, and in the identification of her personal story through a new story both the drama of her experience and her style of action must be reoriented. Conversion is reawakening, a second reawakening of consciousness*

*Her style must change steps, she must dance to a new rhythm. Not only her past and future, but the very cosmos in which she lives is strung in a new way."*3

Narrative serves a crucial function in our lives; it helps us to maintain a personal identity by containing both past and future in every present. When we do not have continuity between remembered past and projected future, we are in danger of going mad. Herein lies the pain of conversion. If it truly does "restring" the very cosmos in which we live, absolutely everything in our lives is transformed. Old stories become useless and valueless.

I would suggest that the Genesis creation stories are among our greatest problems when we think about radical theological/social/psychological change. If "conversion" needs to happen today on a massive scale to accomodate the full humanity of female,black,and homosexual people, and I believe it does, somehow we need to relocate our creation stories. And we need to tell some new ones. Meanwhile, we need to defuse and devalue Genesis 1-3.

Again, Crites provides the key to a possible method for this process. Any story which is in our memory, he says, has successive layers of understanding, all of which may be recalled in telling the story. When we learn new things that effect our understanding of elements of an old story, we can tell the old story in a new way, as though it were a new story. [4] For example, I remember a fight I had with my mother when I was an adolescent. I can still recall the original experience of the argument. I was terribly angry and I desperately wished that someone else was my mother. Later, I learned that adolescents are subject to outbursts such as mine and that as I grew up I was to become more rational. Or I can tell the story in terms of my realization years later that my mother had good reason to be angry and frustrated. The "layers" go on, but the story is the same. All together, however, what we have is a new way of understanding the original experience.

This kind of "layering" has gone on with Genesis 1-3 ever since the creation stories began, thousands of years ago, probably as oral tradition. Most of the interpretations by the "Church Fathers" only reinforce the most destructive elements of the stories. But if we try some new directions for their understanding, perhaps we can diminish their power.

I would suggest that a helpful way to "defuse" the Old Testament creation stories is to try to understand the motivation behind them. I believe that what we discover is the same kind of fear of women's power that we found in the Church Fathers. In the face of the connection between this early fear and the later interpretations of the stories, the Genesis creation stories, along with the entire Judeo-Christian tradition, begins to seem like some kind of cosmic joke.

The Old Testament Creation Stories: Anti-woman polemic?

Archaeological evidence has proven that in the near and middle East, worship of the goddess preceeded the worship of Yahweh and other male "sky" gods by several thousand years.[1] The unity of the religious expressions of the earliest farming communities is striking. It appears that all focused their worship on fertility and the life-giving forces expressed through a feminine diety in human form.[2]

Toward the end of the third millinium B.C.E. life for the worshippers of the goddess suffered a massive disruption. A huge influx of Nomadic invaders swept down into Palestine from the north and destroyed, as far as is known, every major city then in existence; some with incredible violence.[3] These invaders had a martial outlook and worshipped a father god, often located high on a mountain and blazing with light of fire and lightening. The identification of the people indigenous to the area with the goddess and the dark slow earth, was incomprehensible to the people from the north.[4] It was at about this time that Abraham, the first Patriarch of the Hebrew people, came down from Ur into Canaan.[5]

From what we can see of the archaeological data and mythology of this area, it appears that the entire symbolic system of Near Eastern religion began to be reversed at about the same time. Mythology becomes confused, and it finally becomes apparent that this is due to the effort to explain the eventual victory of the male god over the goddess.[6] It is clear that what was going on in Palestine during the third and second millenium was a part of a much larger shift in the symbology of human cultures.

The northern invaders associated the goddess with darkness and evil. It is astonishing that an overwhelming number of myths from widely divergent cultures portrayed the goddess as a serpent, and explained the victory of the male god as the slaying of an evil monster. Zeus establishes the victory of the patriarchal gods of Mount Olympus over the earlier offspring of the great goddess by killing Tryphon.[7] In Hittite Anatolia, the storm god defeats the dragon Illuyankas. In northern Canaan Baal defeats the serpent Lotan or Lawtan. (In the Canaanite language "Lat" means goddess.)[8] In India Indra, the king of the Vedic pantheon, kills the cosmic serpent Vitra.[9]

Perhaps the best-known myth of this kind is the victory of the Babylonian god Maduk over his great-great-great grandmother Tiamat.[10] The beginning of the epic of this event makes it very clear that the oldest generation of dieties in Babylon was female. The first tablet of the Enuma Elish begins,

When on high the heavens were not named, and the earth beneath bore no name, and Apsu primeval, their engenderer, and the "Form" Tiamat, the bearer of all of them, there mingled their waters together; Dark chambers were not constructed, and marshlands were not seen; when none of the gods had been brought into being, and they were not named, and fates were not fixed, then were created the gods in the midst thereof.[11]

It is interesting to note that the only complete account we have of the Enuma Elish was written about 650 B.C.E., and the Priestly account of Yahweh's creation of the world was written about 550 B.C.E.[12] Oral tradition preceeded the writing of both of these accounts by probably a thousand or so years. The similiarity between the Babylonian creation epic and the first page of the Hebrew bible is, of course, striking.

In Genesis 1:2, "The earth was without form and void (Tohu webohu), and darkness was upon the face of the deep (tehom), and the wind (or spirit) of Elohim was moving over the face of the waters."

In the Enuma Elish,"The lord (Marduk) spread out his net and enmeshed her (Tiamat). And when she opened her mouth to the full, he let fly into it an evil wind that poured into her belly, so that her courage was taken from her and her jaws remained open wide."[13]

The name of Tiamat is related etymologically to the Hebrew word for the deep, *tehom.*[14] The amazing similarity between the two accounts continues.

Enuma Elish IV: 135-140 "The lord rested beholding the cadaver (of Tiamat), as he divided the monster, devising cunning things. He split her into two parts, like an oyster. Half of her he set-up and made the heavens as a covering. He slid the bolt and caused watchmen to be stationed. He directed them not to let her waters come forth."[15]

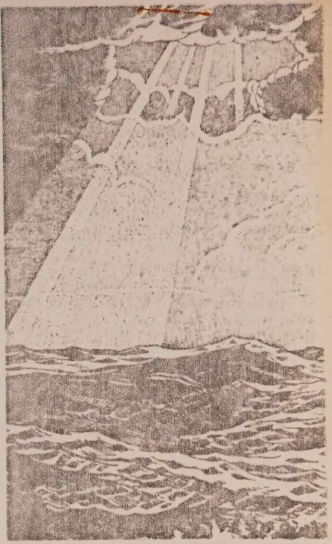
Genesis I: 6-8a "And Elohim said, 'Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.' And Elohim made the firmament and separated the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament. And it was so. God called the firmament Heaven.'"

What I find so facinating here is the male gods' fear of the waters; the chaos. In the Genesis creation story the first thing Elohim says is, "Let there be light." The darkness, as I have mentioned before, is not created. It is preexistant. Genesis represents a later stage in patriarchal development than the Enuma Elish. The great goddess who was earlier the mother of all things and who became a monster in the course of the Babylonian epic is finally reduced in Genesis 1 to darkness and waters; chaos to be feared. The male god is left alone to create out of himself.[16]

But there is another creation story in Genesis, and it surfaces several times in unexpected places. This is the victory of Yahweh over Leviathan, the monsterous serpent, which is mentioned twice in the Psalms and once in Isaiah. In every case, the reference is in the context of creation. (see Psalm 74:13, 104:24, Isaiah 27:1) The word Leviathan is etymologically related to Lawtan, the the name of the Canaanite serpent who was defeated by Baal, and also to "Levite", the designation for the priests of Yahweh. In the book of Job we find a complete, if indirect, account of the battle. It is worth quoting in its entirety.

Can you draw out Leviathan with a fishook, or press down his tongue with a cord? Can you put a rope in his nose, or pierce his jaw with a hook? Will he make many supplications to you? Will he speak to you soft words; Will he make a covenant with you to take him for your servant for ever? Will you play with him as with a bird, or will you put him on a leash for your maidens? Will braders bargain over him? Will they divide him up among the merchants? Can you fill his skin with harpoons, or his head with fishing spears? Lay hands on him; think of the battle; you will not do it again! (Job 41: 1-8)

In the Enuma Elish, Marduk "let loose an arrow, it tore her belly. It severed her inward parts, it rent asunder the heart. He bound her."[18] Later, "With his toothed sickle he split her scalp. He severed the arteries of her blood. The north-wind carried it away to hidden places."[19] The goddess, symbolized by the serpent, has been abused, insulted, and dismembered, along with her point of view. The myth of Leviathan is



about the dismemberment of the goddess, and it set the stage for abuse and devaluation of the women who worshipped Yahweh.

It becomes clear how important the symbol of the serpent is among the symbols of the goddess, chaos, darkness, and evil for patriarchal religions which worshipped a father god of order, anger, and light. The transitional stage between the goddess herself and the serpent as symbol can be seen in the "terrible" manifestation of the goddess, which appears in several cultures. In Greek mythology Medusa was a horrible woman-monster who had hair of snakes and her gaze turned a person to stone. The Egyptian goddess of the underworld, Hathor, is seen as a vulture on earth and a serpent, Vadjet, in the underworld. In India, Kali is a black bloodthirsty diety in the form of a woman. She is pictured stroking cobras in her hands, or with a cobra around her waist?[20]

The serpent, who was invariably connected with the goddess, was not always associated with evil. There is much evidence to suggest that in the ancient Near and Middle East, the serpent was linked to wisdom, prophecy, and esoteric knowledge. It was worshipped as an oracular deity.[21] This brings us to another Old Testament creation account, the story of the fall. Here again, we find a serpent.

For people of biblical times, the presence of a serpent, a sacred fruit tree, and a woman who took the advice of the serpent may have signaled the familiar presence of the goddess.[22] The story of the fall may

COURAGE & PAIN

WOMEN WHO LOVE GOD AND DEFY THEIR CHURCHES

BY TERESA CARPENTER

One morning last October, Sister Theresa Kane startled the nation by beseeching Pope John Paul II to ordain women. It was historic, this encounter between a gentle American nun and her pontiff, then at the height of his triumphal American tour. It was a moment when the ecclesiastical firmament trembled a little. What made it all the more remarkable was that her gesture was not one of a radical. The very fact that Sister Theresa Kane, a moderate conservative from the top echelons of Roman Catholic sisterhood, could have summoned the courage to speak confirmed what many onlookers already knew: These are restless times (continued on page 149)

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COURAGE & PAIN

WOMEN WHO LOVE GOD AND DEFY THEIR CHURCHES

Continued from page 19

for women in religion. During the past ten years a growing number of Christian and Jewish women have found their own conscience to be in conflict with their faith. They are experiencing what Sister Theresa describes as the "pain and suffering" that comes from love for an erring Church. This is the pain of women who feel excluded from the priesthood and rabbinate, offended by male-oriented language in the liturgy and grieved by the belief that they are, for the most part, second-class citizens of faith.

This suffering erupted in serious dissent for the first time in 1974, when 11 women of the Episcopal religion defied their own Church and entered the priesthood without its blessing. Although it threw the Church into temporary turmoil, this rebellion paved the way for official approval of female ordination two years later. The courage and success of the Philadelphia Eleven, as they came to be called, suggest to all women that dissent is not synonymous with sin, nor is disobedience necessarily a cause for excommunication. The Eleven, furthermore, helped bridge what seemed a formidable gap between religion and the Women's Liberation Movement.

Previously, most feminists had repudiated religion as one more bastion of male domination, and religious women, distressed by the Movement's early militancy, shuddered at being called "feminists." Today there are thousands of women, both within and without the formal Women's Movement, who think of themselves, without apology, as "feminists of faith."

Redbook spoke with four of these women—each of a different Church, each a rebel in her own right—to learn of the particular hardships and heartbreak of those who rock the spiritual boat.

The Reverend Suzanne Hiatt, one of the Philadelphia Eleven, never doubted that the Episcopal Church would one day make her a priest. From the time she was a child going along with her parents to Sunday services in Minneapolis, Minnesota, she knew she was destined for the pulpit—a seemingly peculiar ambition for a little girl but, as it turned out, no passing childhood fancy. During the '60s Sue became one of the first women to enter the Episcopal Theological School (now the

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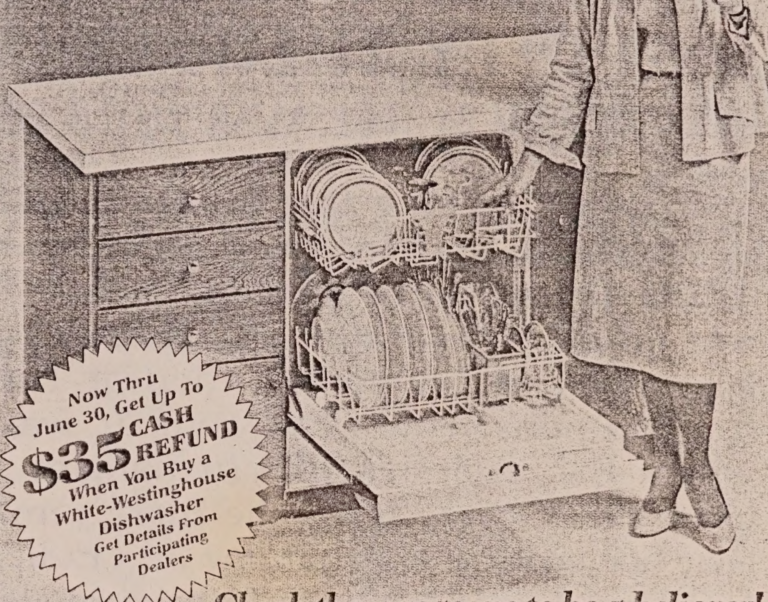

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Episcopal Divinity School) in Cambridge, Massachusetts, with the specific intent of becoming a priest, and she was convinced that the Church would not oppose her ordination. Anglican theologians, after all, had agreed as early as 1919 that there was no Scriptural basis for discriminating against women. Her hopes were raised even higher in 1970, when the General Convention of the Episcopal Church, which meets every three years to debate doctrine and set Church policy, defeated by only a small margin a measure that would have opened the priesthood to women. But in 1973 the General Convention dealt Sue Hiatt and a handful of other women seeking ordination a devastating blow by defeating unequivocally a proposal to open the priesthood to them. The door that had seemed to be opening was shut tight again.

"That was the point of change for me," Sue Hiatt recalls. "I realized that we could go on being 'nice girls,' in which case the question of ordination would be raised as a perennial issue, or we could take steps to convince the Church that it would be more trouble *not* to ordain us than to ordain."

Sue Hiatt and sister candidates who shared her anger called the other women deacons then eligible for ordination and found a few willing to risk the Church's displeasure. She and ten others—the Philadelphia Eleven—were "irregularly" ordained on July 29, 1974, at the Church of the Advocate, in Philadelphia. What was intended to have been a quiet service turned into a media event in a church packed to overflowing with well-wishers and curiosity seekers. "We were afraid," the Reverend Sue Hiatt recalls, "that some crackpot would try to bomb the Church, but the crowd was so overwhelmingly in favor of our ordination that we felt very well protected."

Within two weeks, however, Sue and her companions were exposed to the awful chill of Church censure; the bishops of the Episcopal Church voted to nullify the ordinations, calling them "illicit," and they shunned the women, who offered to explain their actions. Infuriated by the Church's insensitivity, Sue Hiatt became a clerical renegade, celebrating the Eucharist in sympathetic parishes. "To flout Church authority was at first a frightening thing," she recalls, "but it also was exhilarating. The people who came to the Eucharist always knew something was at risk. That kind of atmosphere is electric, the kind that must have been present in the early Church, when to celebrate the Eucharist was to defy the Emperor."

When in 1976 the Church finally voted to accept women as priests and to ordain Sue Hiatt and her sisters officially, the Eleven refused, arguing that their original ordination was valid. The Church quietly gave in—it was more trouble to fight the rebels than to accept them.

More than three years later the struggle for acceptance still goes on. Rev. Sue Hiatt observes: "There are some dioceses where women priests are simply not welcome. The real resistance we find out there is not against having women preach as deacons but in having them celebrate the Sacrament. That goes back, I think, to some very primitive feelings about women and magic. For women to be involved in the mysteries of the Sacrament conjures up ideas about witchcraft in the minds of some people. But these prejudices will be overcome with time."

The Reverend Sue Hiatt now teaches pastoral theology to other candidates for the priesthood, both women and men, at the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge. Looking back now on the turbulence and discord that preceded the Church's official change of heart, she is convinced that she and the others were right to disobey. "If we had not followed our conscience," Sue asserts, "the Church would be tossing around the abstract question of women's ordination for the next twenty-five years."

A more frustrated candidate awaiting her own ordination is Catharine Stewart-Roache, a small, precise woman now living in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Like Sue Hiatt, Catharine had known from the time she was a child that she wanted to be a priest—a Catholic priest. "Way back then, I remember, around the time when kids talk about what they want to be when they grow up—about eight—I felt called to the priesthood," she explains. "It just popped into my head and it scared me to death. I didn't tell my parents. But I knew I didn't want to be in a religious order of nuns. I wanted to be a *priest!*"

Indeed, Catharine remembers being so intimidated by her own spiritual urges that she went through a Catholic grade school, a Catholic high school and a Catholic college without confiding in anyone about them. Instead she quietly sorted through the panoply of saints, looking for women who had managed to defy the model of obedient Catholic womanhood and had succeeded. Only after marrying a research scientist and giving birth to five children did she finally find the courage to announce her "calling."

Her husband was supportive. Her parents, astonished by the audacity of their devout daughter, were scandalized. And Catharine's bishop informed her plainly

"Be mindful of the intense suffering and pain"

The following is the text of the remarks made by Sister M. Theresa Kane, R.S.M., to Pope John Paul II at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., on October 7, 1979.

In the name of the women religious gathered in this shrine dedicated to Mary, I greet you, Your Holiness Pope John Paul the Second. It is an honor, a privilege and an awesome responsibility to express in a few moments the sentiments of women present at this shrine dedicated to Mary, the Patroness of the United States and the Mother of all humankind. It is appropriate that a woman's voice be heard in this shrine and I call upon Mary to direct what is in my heart and on my lips during these moments of greeting.

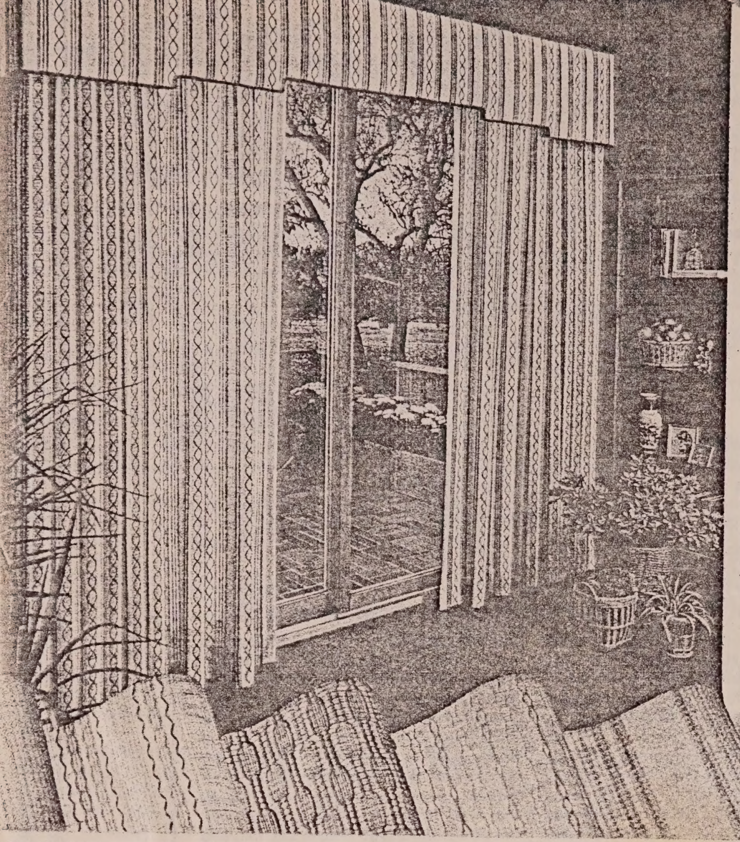
I welcome you sincerely; I extend greetings of profound respect, esteem and affection from women religious throughout this country. With the sentiments experienced by Elizabeth when visited by Mary, our hearts too leap with joy as we welcome you—you who have been called the Pope of the People. As I welcome you today, I am mindful of the countless number of women religious who have dedicated their lives to the Church in this country in the past. The lives of many valiant women who were catalysts of growth for the United States Church continue to serve as heroines of inspiration to us as we too struggle to be women of courage and hope during these times.

Women religious in the United States entered into the renewal efforts in an obedient response to the call of Vatican II. We have experienced both joy and suffering in our efforts. As a result of such renewal women religious approach the next decade with a renewed identity and a deep sense of our responsibilities to, with and in the Church.

Your Holiness, the women of this country have been inspired by your spirit of courage. We thank you for exemplifying such courage in speaking to us so directly about our responsibilities to the poor and the oppressed throughout the world. We who live in the United States, one of the wealthiest nations of the earth, need to become ever more conscious of the suffering that is present among so many of our brothers and sisters, recognizing that systemic injustices are serious moral and social issues that need to be confronted courageously. We pledge ourselves in solidarity with you in your efforts to respond to the cry of the poor.

As I share this privileged moment with you, Your Holiness, I urge you to be mindful of the intense suffering and pain that is part of the life of many women in these United States. I call upon you to listen with compassion and to hear the call of women, who comprise half of humankind. As women we have heard the powerful messages of our Church addressing the dignity and reverence for all persons. As women we have pondered upon these words. Our contemplation leads us to state that the Church, in its struggle to be faithful to its call for reverence and dignity for all persons, must respond by providing the possibility of women as persons being included in all ministries of our Church. I urge you, Your Holiness, to be open to and respond to the voices coming from the women of this country who are desirous of serving in and through the Church as fully participating members.

Finally I assure you, Pope John Paul, of the prayers, support and fidelity of the women religious in this country as you continue to challenge us to be of holiness for the sake of the Kingdom. With these few words from the joyous, hope-filled prayer, the Magnificat, we call upon Mary to be your continued source of inspiration, courage and hope: "May your whole being proclaim and magnify the Lord; may your spirit always rejoice in God your savior; the Lord who is mighty has done great things for you; holy is God's Name."



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that God did not call women to the priesthood.

Armed with a doctorate from the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley, in California, she traveled to Detroit, Michigan, in 1975 for a meeting with 1,300 other activists. Together they founded the Women's Ordination Conference. Buoyed by the support of other thwarted candidates, Catharine's hopes for ordination grew until 1977, when the Conference drew a blunt rebuff from Rome. A contingent of American bishops persuaded Pope Paul VI to discourage "false hope" by proclaiming that women cannot be ordained because they do not bear a "natural resemblance to Christ."

Catharine Stewart-Roache finds this notion ridiculous, even heretical. She feels that inside her woman's body is the love and compassion it takes to be a priest. But the current Pope does not agree. During his visit to America last fall, Pope John Paul II reaffirmed the Church's stand on the male priesthood, a move that fortified the foes of women's ordination and made its advocates among American bishops more reluctant to speak out. That leaves Catharine Stewart-Roache and about 500 other candidates hanging in clerical limbo—in a state of unrequited pain that Sister Theresa Kane tried to convey to a tradition-bound Catholic hierarchy. [For the text of her remarks to the Pope, see page 151.]

Would these women dare, as the Philadelphia Eleven had dared, to be ordained without official Church sanction? Probably not, because unlike the Episcopal canon, which did not officially discriminate against women, Catholic law clearly states that a priest must be a baptized *male.* Moreover, crossing the more rigid and more conservative Catholic hierarchy so blatantly would mean almost certain excommunication. But the Church's refusal to ordain women is slowly turning devout dissenters such as Catharine Stewart-Roache into militants.

During the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in 1978, she stood in chains beside other members of the Women's Ordination Conference to advertise the plight of priests-in-waiting. And this year she kept a solitary vigil outside the Conference door as the bishops voted down reforms that would have removed sexist language from the Mass. This once-obedient Catholic girl wore a blue armband in support of Theresa Kane and the 53 nuns who stood in protest at the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, and nowadays she wears a bright-red button reading: "Equal Rites."

Ten brief years ago she was, as she puts it, "a dutiful Catholic wife and mother." Today she and her husband Pat, along with their five children, have divided household responsibilities, preparing for the day when "Mother becomes a priest." Will ordination, when and if it comes, disrupt her family's life? "Not any more than if I had decided to become a physician," says Catharine matter-of-factly. She has become a full feminist of faith.

Blu Greenberg is a *rebbetzin,* the wife of an Orthodox rabbi, and lives in Riverdale, New York. All her life she has followed faithfully the prescriptions of the *halacha,* a code of religious conduct governing everything from prayer to keeping a kosher kitchen. Her five children attend Yeshivas—schools of Hebrew studies—and she admits no intrusion upon her family's Sabbath celebration, from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday.

But while Blu Greenberg's adherence to tradition befits a rabbi's wife, the fact that she considers herself a feminist does not. Feminism, in fact, is anathema to the Orthodox, the most conservative branch of Judaism. In the world in which the Rebbetzin Greenberg lives, no rabbinical authority has seriously entertained the notion of women rabbis. Women may not lead religious services and are not counted technically as part of the minyan, or spiritual congregation. They must worship, in fact, behind a rail, physically separated from men. Nowhere is it explicitly written that women are inferior—indeed, woman has been extolled as "mistress and queen of the household"—yet the typical Orthodox man begins his day with a series of blessings, among which is, "I thank you, O God, that Thou hast not made me a woman."

3lu Greenberg began her drift toward ninism nearly 17 years ago, when her sband (whom she describes as "one of most progressive thinkers in the Or-dox rabbinate") brought her a copy of ty Friedan's book *The Feminine Mys-ue.* She was moved by its arguments, it took her ten years to begin reconcil- the conflicts between feminism and hodox Judaism. She was torn, as are st Orthodox, between "what is best for men and what is best for the Jews." And ninism has been popularly held to run unter to the need for Jewish women to olenish their people and keep their nilies strong in the aftermath of the locaust.

Six years ago, however, Blu Greenberg gan speaking to religious and civic oups on the possibility of Jewish men's subscribing to a modified brand feminism—one that kept the emphasis on their importance in the family, yet shed for religious reforms. Her own nsciousness, meanwhile, rose gradually, a series of clicks."

Recently, while editing galleys of her w book, *On Women and Judaism: A ew From Tradition* (Jewish Publication ciety, Philadelphia), she found she had update several of her older essays be-use they no longer reflected her think-. "For example, when Sally Priesand s ordained a rabbi in the liberal Reform anch of Judaism in 1972, I wrote it off as Reform gesture, one not for Orthodox daism," she explains. "Then I asked my-f, 'Why?' Then I asked, 'Why not?' aybe it's not sex characteristics that ke a good rabbi."

Blu Greenberg is not a radical, but her inions have made it necessary for her to lk a tightrope within the Orthodox mmunity. She and her husband have ken care not to become involved in "per-nal fights" with the rabbinate. "We have gued, rather, through our writing. We ve not wanted to make our children the gets of ridicule. I know that I am the tt of a lot of jokes, but I've learned to ugh them off. There is a certain loneli-ss, but I do not feel sorry for myself."

Blu is now working for reform of the wish divorce law, which only permits en to grant a divorce to their wives. here is room for a more liberal interpre-tion of these laws," she explains, "but ere is simply not enough pressure being ought to bear on those who have respon-oility for interpreting them. What I ink we have to do is to learn from the cular Woman's Movement, to use some the same techniques. If two thousand omen, for example, were to protest in ont of the homes of the foremost au-orities of Jewish law, it might not pro-ice radical changes in the law, but it cer-inly would bring a different perspective it."

Unfortunately, the Rebbetzin Green-rg knows that she could not muster a rce of 2,000 Orthodox women to come rth and protest. The feminists who do ist within orthodoxy have not yet ached the point at which they can oenly confront their rabbis. And if the iguish of inequality becomes too great, omen can always move along the con-nuum of Judaism into the Conservative ovement, which allows women to be counted as equals in prayer, or into the Reform movement, which ordains women as rabbis.

But this option of "moving left" has never tempted Blu Greenberg. "It is the commitment to Orthodox Judaism," she explains, "that inspires the most pain and the most love. A Jew who lives according to tradition has a very rich life. At four o'clock on Friday evening I will light my candles, and it's quite an incredible experi-ence. You get a different sense of the self on the Sabbath. A release from the whirly, whirly world. There's nothing quite like it. No. I could not leave."

For Sonia Johnson, a Mormon house-wife from Sterling, Virginia, leaving her religion was not a matter of choice. Of all the women who have recently challenged their churches, she faced the most difficult set of problems. Unlike Sue Hiatt and Catharine Stewart-Roache, who chose to lobby for sexual equality from within their faiths, Sonia Johnson chose to confront hers on the presumably neutral ground of politics. And unlike Blu Greenberg, whose consciousness rose little by little, Sonia became an "instant feminist." It hap-pened during a church service one night early in 1978, when she glimpsed what she perceived as the "hypocrisy" of her Mor-mon elders.

For many years before that night ar-rived, she had, like most other Mormon women, accepted without question the doctrines that came filtering down from the Church hierarchy in Salt Lake City. Among these was the assertion that the

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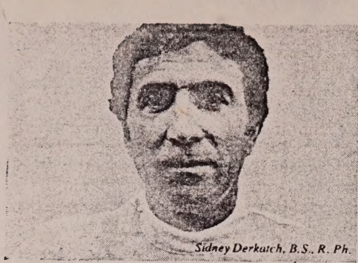

Sidney Derkatch, B.S., R. Ph.

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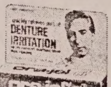
A: Your sties and heavy dates are nothing more than coincidence. Sties develop as an inflammation at the edge of the eyelid which then may become infected with bacteria. At any rate there is an excellent product available without prescription that should bring you the relief you're looking for. Its name? STYE ™. It's good for "granulated" eyelids, too.

Q: For some reason my dentures don't seem to fit right anymore and they irritate my gums. Is there anything I can use until I get them fixed?



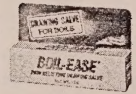
A: Everyone's gums recede with age. This is true whether a person has his original teeth or not. That is probably why your dentures don't fit properly anymore. While you're waiting to get them fixed, try ORAJEL® /d. It not only gives on-the-spot relief with an anesthetic and analgesic, it contains a special anti-irritant that helps when you're "breaking in" new or relined dentures.

Q: I seem to be the only one in my family who gets excess wax in my ears. It hardens and doesn't come out easily, either. What do you recommend?

A: Carbamide peroxide formulas seem to work best in softening, loosening and dissolving ear wax, and there are many good ones available.

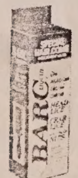
However, of all these, I recommend AURO® DROPS because it comes in a tube dispenser. This makes AURO much easier to use than similar formulas which come in old-fashioned, inconvenient droppers.

Q: What can I do about the occasional boils I get on the back of my neck?



A: Boils, or furuncles, are small, superficial abscesses which usually occur around hair follicles. They can lead to abscesses in other parts of the body so they should be treated. An excellent medication is BOIL-EASE®. It's a salve that draws on the boil and helps relieve the pain and itching. It kills germs, too.

Q: There's a slight epidemic of lice in the school my children attend. What can I do?



A: Your best bet is to make sure they bathe and change their clothes daily. Lice and scabies (mange mites) are passed along by contact with infected people, clothing or bedding. If your children pick up any lice or mites on their heads, or bodies, get BARC® LIQUID or CREAM. Just one application can kill these pesky parasites.

proposed Equal Rights Amendment to the United States Constitution was to be hated and feared, for it would lead to the dissolution of the American family. For Sonia, the Equal Rights Amendment was nothing more than a distant struggle, irrelevant to her well-ordered existence as a wife and the mother of four children. Vague curiosity, however, drew her to that fateful meeting at which a Church elder was scheduled to explain the Church's official objections to the ERA.

"I couldn't understand how anyone could be against anything called the 'Equal Rights Amendment.' But I was sure the elder would explain it and that would settle it. Well, he read a letter that told how women have always held an exalted place in our Church, how much the Church loved us, but how the Equal Rights Amendment would just cause endless litigation. I had always taken the elders' rhetoric at face value, but in one instant I saw what they were saying: 'Women, you are not *worth* endless litigation, so don't rock the boat.' It was devastating."

Sonia Johnson slipped into a depression that lasted for six months. During that time she read every feminist book she could lay her hands on. "Sometimes I would lie in bed at night with the tears streaming down my cheeks," she says, "but I had to *know*." At first she and a handful of sympathizers did nothing more radical than march in ERA parades. But in October, 1978, after the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate had voted to extend the deadline for ratifying the ERA, Sonia Johnson noticed something irregular happening within the Church. The hierarchy had begun giving seminars in lobbying techniques to Mormon Church members in Virginia and sending these persons to the state legislature to represent themselves as "private citizens" against the ERA.

Sonia and three friends who banded together to form "Mormons for ERA" contacted the Secretary of the Commonwealth of Virginia, who then required the Church to register as a legitimate lobbyist. That presumption on the part of a Mormon woman outraged the Church hierarchy, and Sonia Johnson was brought to trial before a Church tribunal for teaching "false doctrine"—for claiming that the Church preached a "savage misogyny." The verdict was excommunication—the harshest the Church could deliver. It meant that Sonia Johnson would be separated from her husband and children in heaven.

Sonia wept but she would not repent and be re-baptized. There was nothing, she said, for which she needed to repent. She vowed instead to continue fighting the Church on the question of ERA. "What I have actually been excommunicated for is disloyalty," she maintained, "and there isn't such a charge. That I would go out and tell people what the Church is doing—the men can't accept that. They really can't."

Now in her private hours she is having to deal with enormous personal pain. She is cut off from a brother who called for her excommunication. Her husband and children are so embittered by the trial that they will not return to the Church. Sonia still attends services because, she explains,

"I feel as if the worst has been done. [I've] been hurt as badly as I can be."

"You ask me, 'Why not repudiate [the] Church?' I can't do it because I do still [feel] a lot of loyalty to it. Its teachings [have] such power to make people happy [...] seems that you have a responsibility to [see] that things you love don't get ruined.

"As far as my immortal soul is c[on]cerned, I know God isn't going to be bo[und] by any injustice done here on earth. [He] knows my soul and knows I am not ca[pa]ble of doing the things those men sa[id I] did. There is a feeling among the old b[oys] in the Church that God is a man, that Go[d is] always going to listen to men first. B[ut I] just don't believe that God is part of t[he] old boys' network."

For Sonia Johnson, Suzanne Hiatt, [...] Greenberg, Catharine Stewart-Roache [...] other feminists of faith, the price of [dis]sent has often been loneliness [and] ridicule. Yet these women are str[ong]. What fuels their courage is an endu[ring] loyalty to their faith and a deep yearn[ing] to be embraced by their churches as [...] and equal partners. THE [END]

As a service to readers, we are prep[ar]ing reprints of the article above i[n a] convenient form for those wishing [to] save it or send copies to friends. If [you] would like a reprint, send 50 cents [in] coin (no stamps, please) with [a] stamped, self-addressed, business-s[ize] envelope to Department C-145, R[ed]book Magazine, 230 Park Avenue, N[ew] York, New York 10017. For larger [or]ders, postage is included at the foll[ow]ing prices: 10 copies—$3.50; 50—$15[...] Please allow three weeks for deliv[ery]. Prices of other quantities are availa[ble] on request. This offer expires Septe[m]ber 30, 1980.

TURNING THE TABLES FROM OLD TO NE[W]

Information about the furnishings and materials shown on pages 96 and 99:

All items listed below are available in most [de]partment stores throughout the country. [For] more information about these items write [...] Redbook Home Furnishings Department, [2...] Park Avenue, New York, New York 10017.

Tile It:
Natural-finish, solid-pine "Woodstock" oc[ca]sional table, 28 by 28 by 14 inches high, fr[om] Conran's. Mexican 4-by-4-inch "Flight" bird p[at]tern; "Margarite" floral pattern; and solid-bl[ue] handmade, ceramic-glazed tiles—all from El[...] Inc. Three-piece set of duck-design open b[as]kets, from Boxer and Ashfield.

Cut It Out:
Cotton fabrics in "Persian Circle" and "Persi[an] Square" patterns, 63 inches wide, from t[he] Tableware Collection from France, distributed [by] Fabrications. Tray and enameled mug, fro[m] Azuma.

Staple It:
"Hearts"-pattern, polyvinyl-coated cotton fabr[ic], 50 inches wide, from Fabrications. "Ea[sy] Squeeze Decorator" staple gun (style 101), fro[m] Swingline. Assorted blank note cards, fro[m] Azuma.

Yale Institute of Sacred Music

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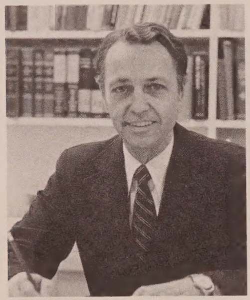
July 1983

Inside:
Feminist Theology
and Liturgical Renewal

PRISM

From the Acting Director:



Yale University Office of Public Information

Once again there is a word *From the Acting Director*. It had been the hope of all of those connected with the Institute of Sacred Music that by the time this *PRISM* came to you, there would be a word *From the Director*, a word from the *New* Director. But the search process which was mounted with great diligence during the past academic year was not completed and will be continued in the coming year. The search committee has been reconstituted, chaired again by Professor Jaroslav Pelikan.

The *Acting Director* title is the same, but the face and the name are different. During 1982-83, Aidan Kavanagh served the Institute for a second time as the Acting Director, and gave effective and imaginative leadership. The Institute is deeply in his debt for his willingness to take on the administrative responsibilities, and for the strength which he brought to the Institute during the past year.

When Father Kavanagh indicated that because of teaching and writing commitments, he would not be able to continue as Acting Director, President Giamatti asked if I would assume the responsibility for this academic year. As a member of the Divinity School faculty and administration, I have been keenly aware of the great contribution which the Institute has made to our common life, and have had the opportunity of working with a good many Institute students in the preaching courses. I look forward to the opportunity to get even better acquainted with the Institute, its program and its people during this coming year.

It is obviously a disappointment that a new Director is not leading the Institute. Let me make three brief comments about the situation. First, the fact that the President did not make an appointment this year is not a sign of a lack of interest or concern on the part of the University. To the contrary, the President is deeply committed to the Institute, sufficiently committed to spend more time in the search for the best possible leadership.

Second, the Institute is continuing to do its job and do it well. I happened to know rather well a number of the Institute students who graduated in May. They were an impressive group of people, and the quality of their work gives striking demonstration not only to their own abilities but to the guidance and nurture which they received through the Institute.

Third, in the brief time since I have accepted this position, I have had opportunity to talk with most of the members of the faculty and staff. I am impressed with their commitment to the task of providing the best possible education and experience for the students who are entering or continuing at the Institute this year. I look forward to working with them, and know that together we will make this a good year.

Sincerely,

Harry B. Adams

Harry B. Adams
Yale Institute of Sacred Music

July 1983

Jonathan Dimmock

Feminist Theology and Liturgical Renewal, by Sr. Catherine Vincie, RSHM

The following reflections are excerpts from my Institute Project: WOMEN'S THEOLOGY--CHALLENGE TO CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY AND WORSHIP. In this project, I focused on the role of the liturgist and the liturgical scholar within the broader Church community. As a liturgical musician myself, I understand the role of the liturgist or liturgical scholar as one of service to the community. The following questions surfaced as being of primary importance in a discussion of the relationship between the liturgist and the larger community: are there major shifts taking place in the community which call for our attention and reflection? Are there new insights into the community's understanding of God and ways of being Church which call us to respond in new and creative ways? Does the community hold those who perform a special service within that community responsible to reflect new changes and new insights, even if those ministers cannot claim these new changes and insights as "their own" yet?

These are very large and challenging questions. The following brief reflections are a tentative response to such questions and are inadequate at best. Nonetheless, it is important for the liturgical community to grapple with these questions and to consider various responses to them. I offer the following as one possible response.

Cathy Vincie graduated from the Institute of Sacred Music with the Master of Divinity degree in May 1983. She was co-recipient of the Institute's Faculty Prize, awarded to the student(s) "whose work, in the opinion of the Faculty, is of a quality that best exemplifies the purposes of the Institute."

The Divinity School awarded her the degree magna cum laude and named her a recipient of the Tew Prize for demonstrating exceptional ability in philosophy, literature, ethics, or history; and also the Mersick Prize, for effective public address, especially in preaching.

She has been appointed Instructor in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies at Marymount College, Tarrytown, New York.

The illustrations accompanying the article and used on the cover of this issue are drawn from slides used in a litany which Cathy created for her Colloquium presentation. They are purposefully anonymous representations of women in Christian leadership roles.

Two major events in the last two decades have profoundly influenced the life of the Roman Catholic Church as well as other Christian Churches. They are the Second Vatican Council and the development of the women's movement.

The Council was initiated by the hierarchical magisterium: the pope and the bishops, exercising their authority as the teaching-governing body of the Church. The participants in the Council were clerics and male. No women were present at the first or second sessions. Few participants seemed disturbed by the absence of women members of the Church but at the insistence of Cardinal Leo Suenens, "auditrices" were nominated to the remaining sessions. Women observers from other traditions were invited as well.

The second event, the development of the women's movement, has been a grass roots enterprise. It was initiated not by decree, but from the insights of individual women, first shared in small communities and then spilling over the confines of these communities into wider and wider circles. Although these two events began independently of one another, their interrelationship would soon prove to be significant.

On October 20, 1962, nine days after the Second Vatican Council officially opened, the participants released this statement: "In this assembly, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we wish to inquire how we ought to renew ourselves, so that we may be found increasingly faithful to the gospel of Christ."[1] Thus the Council ushered in a period of renewal and revitalization of the Church's structures, teachings, practices and worship. Although initiated from the top of a hierarchical organization, the ramifications of the Council's work have touched every aspect of the Church's life and all members of the Church community.

This Council opened the Church to the possibility of reform and renewal in two ways: through its own acts, documents and commissions, and through the response of all the members of the Church community. In particular, women of the Church heard that call to renewal and have answered by taking on the responsibility of participating in the renewal. Once denied a voice by the institutional model of the Church, women are now developing new ways of relating within the Church, new models of theologizing and new modes of worshipping. Women are naming themselves an essential part of the Church and from their own experience they are reclaiming and asserting their right to speak as Church. In so doing, women now challenge the whole Christian community to acknowledge and take into account the insights and reflections of women persons of the Church. This dynamic of women naming themselves Church and voicing their faith experiences has come to be called Feminist Theology.

"Women are naming themselves an essential part of the Church and from their own experience they are reclaiming and asserting their right to speak as Church."

A major contribution of Feminist Theology to the broader Christian community has been the articulation of how our understanding of God and our language for God influences our own self-understanding. Women are pointing out that imaging God in predominantly masculine and monarchical terms has contributed to the shaping of a society based on male domination and female subordination. Not only has this pattern been true for Western society in general, but this same model of male superiority has significantly shaped Church teachings, structures and community worship as well.

Feminist Theology suggests that the Christian tradition has been a partial tradition which has largely ignored the faith experience of women members of the Church as well as the reflection on that experience. Women have been marginalized in the community and their gifts have not been called forth for the benefit of all members of the Church. This analysis has led some to conclude that the Church itself has perpetuated the injustices of patriarchal sexism rather than being the channel of God's liberating word.

As more women become conscious of the patriarchal bias of the Church and more women become educated in theological studies, the documentation and analysis of the partiality of the tradition has increased in both volume and quality. The fundamental challenge of Feminist Theology continues to be: does the Church reflect in practice what it professes in theory as authentic Gospel values? To the extent that it does, Christian Feminists embrace the Church.

To the extent that it does not, they call the Church to repentance and conversion.

It seems appropriate here to ask if the development of Feminist Theology (understood as women's response to the call for renewal) has had an effect specifically on the Liturgical renewal? Do the recently renewed rites take into account women's new insights and reflections or does this task still remain to be done? Clearly, the answer to these two questions will shed some light on the role and responsibility of the liturgist at the moment and in the immediate future.

The Liturgical Reform movement itself had begun long before Vatican II. We can date its origins in the motu proprio of Pius X, Tra Le Sollicitudini (Restoration of Church Music, 1903) and follow its development in the works of such scholars as Audet, Benoit, Bouyer, Dix, Jungmann and others. Sacrosanctum Concilium (The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 1963) was the culmination of the liturgical renewal preceding it; it also set the norms for the revisions of the rites carried out after the Council closed.

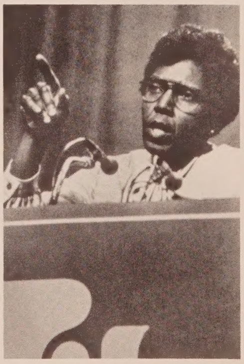
The rites were revised during the mid and late sixties and early seventies, a time before Feminist Theology had come into its own. Thus the renewed liturgies we have at present do not reflect the special experiences and insights of women members of the Church. The revisions were done with the understanding that theological reflections of men sufficed to express the experiences of all persons of the Church. That understanding no longer obtains.

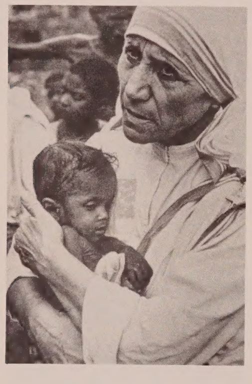
Both the women's movement and Feminist Theology have demonstrated the pervasiveness of the injustices inherent in patriarchal sexism both in society and in the Church. Women are declaring that the continuation of those same patterns of exclusion and dominance of one group over another is no longer acceptable. Women are speaking from their own experience of alienation and discrimination within the Church and therefore must be taken most seriously. To ignore these experiences, now being proclaimed clearly and often, is to perpetuate the very structures and attitudes against which these voices are raised.

Not to become party to this oppression then, suggests a conscious decision to find new structures and new attitudes that will heal the brokenness of the past and bring the Church into a new future. For the liturgists and liturgical scholars of the Christian community, both women and men, this means a deliberate turning towards the women of the Church: to hear, to be open, to be responsive to these new voices. Then, we are asked to use our talents, our skills, and our training to incorporate these insights into the liturgies that we shape through our special participation. If we are liturgical scholars involved in historical research, Feminist Theology challenges us to do this research with a new sensitivity and awareness that the tradition has been enormously tilted toward the male members of the community. As two women theologians have reminded us, "theologians (and liturgists) are coparticipants, not caretakers of the truth. They are necessary, but not sufficient."[2] Feminist Theology holds the theologian, the liturgist, and the artist responsible to the community of which they are but a part.

Feminist Theology needs liturgists and liturgical scholars to assist in shaping a liturgy true to the faith experience of the whole Christian community both past and present, both women and

"Feminist Theology suggests that the Christian tradition has been a partial tradition which has largely ignored the faith experience of women members of the Church as well as the reflection on that experience."





men. The contribution of Feminist Theology has been to articulate the particular experiences and reflections of women persons of the Church. Integrating these experiences and reflections into the corporate worship of the whole community still remains to be done.

The worship life of a given community can be considered on many levels and from many perspectives. As with everything that is reflected upon critically, the questions asked of our present situation help determine the shape of our future. The questions become the lens through which to focus and to reflect on our present reality and so challenge it. The questions asked become a way of seeing or not seeing, a way of opening up our vision to new possibilities or of blinding us to what is.

I began this essay by stating that I understood the ministry of the liturgist and liturgical scholar as one of service to the community. It is essential then that we be aware of the growth and changes occurring within the community and be responsive to those changes. The development of Feminist Theology seems to be of great significance for the Church at this time. Women are asking new questions of the Christian tradition, new questions of worship, and new questions of Eucharistic practice. With the special gifts and skills that are ours, those of us who minister in the worship of the Church are challenged to use the lens of Feminist Theology to focus, reflect and work toward a second renewal of the rites.

The Second Vatican Council began an extraordinary event in the life of the Church: the empowerment of the People of God. It seems to me that there are two possibilities for the Church as a result of this change. One possibility is the empowerment of individuals, of special interest groups, and of communities, and the fragmentation of the Church into these independent, autonomous groups. The other possibility lies in the empowerment of all members and groups within the Church and the bonding together of these groups in a relationship of mutuality, respect, interdependence and participation, celebrating our uniqueness and our unity in the Trinity.

For me, the second possibility is the very best expression of what Feminist Theology has envisioned for the future. The challenge of Feminist Theology to the Church is to embody that vision in ecclesial life, teaching and structures. The challenge to the liturgist and liturgical scholar is to work with the community in bringing that vision into the corporate worship of the Church.

Footnotes

1. *"Message to Humanity," Opening Message of the Second Vatican Council, October 20, 1962.*

2. *Sally Bently, and Claire Randall, "The Spirit Moving: A New Approach to Theologizing," Christianity and Crisis 34, no. 1 (Feb. 4, 1974): 6.*

Class of 1982: Degree Projects, by Martha Israel

The seven members of the Institute's Class of 1982 demonstrated once again the breadth of interest and inquiry stimulated by a genuinely interdisciplinary course of study. The following abstracts convey the central theme of the written aspect of the project. Ruth Macadam, Chris Tietze, and Bob Troeger presented their research in Colloquium on subsequent Wednesday afternoons. The other students designed public services or concerts. Each student then defended all research in an oral examination with a three-person advisory committee.

James D. Hicks, MM:
Selected Choral Works of Kenneth Leighton, 1948-79: An Analysis

Jim's project focuses on the work of English musician Kenneth Leighton. A contemporary composer with roots in the English choral tradition, Leighton is not associated with the church even though he is a writer of sacred music. This paradox is addressed in a series of personal interviews with the composer. Also discussed are Leighton's philosophy of composing, the performance practice of his music, and, in general, his musical aesthetic. Jim then provides a musical analysis of five sacred choral works which span the composer's career. He traces Leighton's compositional development from early works highly dependent on traditional English choral style (Lully, lulla, thou little tiny child, 1948) to the Missa Cornelia, Op. 81 (1979), the product of thirty years of musical exploration and growth. The paper includes a catalogue of Leighton's works from 1946-1976 and a discography. A concert of Kenneth Leighton's music was presented by James Hicks at Trinity Church on the Green, February 14, 1982.

Christoph Tietze, MMA:
Sigfrid Karg-Elert (1877-1933): Dual Nature and Dual Expression

In his degree project, Christoph Tietze states that while existing approaches to the work of Sigfrid Karg-Elert mention a dual nature and a dual expression, none establishes an analytical relationship between the two. The purpose of this project is to see how Karg-Elert's unique spirituality, manifested in a dual nature, found its expression in music. This dual nature, stemming from different characteristics of his parents, is not a split personality; the two sides must interact and struggle with each other. Karg-Elert's single spirituality found expression through two natures and philosophies. Using specific examples from the organ works, Christoph demonstrates how pieces dominated by the Lutheran mother's traits are inspired by the Bible and hymns, tied to the Word, and conservative in tonality and form. On the other hand, works stemming from his father's temperament are emotional and sensual, free in tonality and form, and inspired by the aesthetic dimension of the liturgy.

Ruth Watt Macadam, MAR:
Recent Developments in the Church Music of Costa Rica

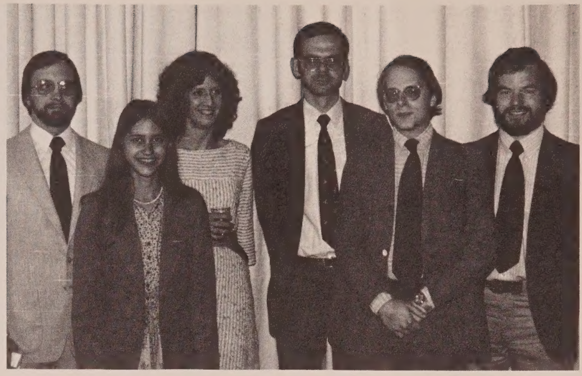
According to Ruth Macadam, six characteristics of Costa Rica and its people have strongly influenced church music currently used in the country. The people are emotional, committed to the church, and strongly nationalistic. The population is homogeneous, and enjoys a high rate of literacy. Finally, a particular radio station, Faro del Caribe, broadcasts religious music, providing a major source of new songs for many churches. Demonstrating the influence of these six items, the body of Ruth's paper consists of an analysis of the music from seven Costa Rican churches of different denominations, economic levels, and educational backgrounds. In all cases the music is simple and personal; in some instances a growing theological awareness is finding expression. Study of an eighth church and an interview with its leaders gives an indication of what is hoped for in the future.

W. Thomas Jones, MM/MAR:
The Mass in Contemporary Worship

Tom Jones' "Mass for Parish Use" comprises the major part of his degree project. The composition is scored for congregation, SATB choir, two trumpets, two trombones, tuba, tympani and organ. Planned for use in a parish setting, this music is intended for the congregation. Tom warns that unfamiliarity may give the illusion that the piece is more difficult than it actually is. The setting, while challenging, is not unrealistic for congregational use, in Jones' opinion. The source of the texts for "Mass for Parish Use" is The Holy Eucharist--Rite II, from The Book of Common Prayer (1979). The paper accompanying the composition discusses the use of contemporary language in worship and the wedding of that language with contemporary music. Also included is the composer's analysis of his composition. The work was presented in a celebration of All Saints Day, Nov. 1, 1981 in Marquand Chapel.

Robert Troeger, MAR:
Richard Felciano: The Composer as Theologian

Richard Felciano, an American composer born in 1930, has been influenced by Luigi Dallapiccola and Darius Milhaud. Since 1963 he has been involved with the use of electronic media and has written pieces using mixed and electronic media for church use. Bob's paper concentrates on those of Felciano's works having a definite theological or biblical basis. A significant source for Felciano's theological expression, the works and theories of Teilhard de Chardin are discussed. Specific examples demonstrate how Teilhard's philosophy is reflected in the composer's work. Felciano recognizes a need for an expanded Christian awareness, and sees the artist as an agent of the process espoused by Teilhard. Other works of Felciano, based on sacred texts but not strongly linked with Teilhard are discussed. Also, the composer's musical language is explored in relation to a single work in an analysis of Felciano's Sic Transit, a work commissioned by the Cathedral of St. John the Divine.



Jonathan Dimmock

Members of the Class of 1982: Robert Troeger, Lynn Caddey, Jennifer Lester, Christoph Tietze, James Hicks, Thomas Jones; not present, Ruth Watt Macadam

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Lynn M. Caddey, MAR:
Yom haShoah: An Educational Program and Liturgy for Christians

Yom haShoah, literally "Day of the Catastrophe", is the day in the Jewish liturgical calendar dedicated to the memory of the six million people who died in the Holocaust. An increasing number of Christian churches, realizing the implications of the attempted extermination of an entire people, also have recently begun to observe Yom haShoah as part of their liturgical year. Such an observance of Yom haShoah is the focal point of Lynn's project. In order to provide an adequate background for the service, a study series intended for presentation in the weeks preceeding Yom haShoah has been prepared. The topics covered include a basic introduction to Judaism, an historical view of the Holocaust, and a study of anti-semitism in Christian theology. Among the materials used to stimulate discussion are Merton's The Nonviolent Alternative and Elie Wiesel's Night. The goal of the study sessions is to focus attention on universal attitudes which caused and allowed the Holocaust, and continue to threaten society. The service itself, "Eucharist on the Day of Remembrance of the Holocaust", was first presented on April 19, 1982, the eve of Yom haShoah, and is offered in the hope that it will "serve to renew commitment to a truly Christian life of responsibility and love for all people."

Jennifer A. Lester, MM:
Performance Practice in Tenebrae: Two Settings of the Lamentations of Jeremiah

Tenebrae is traditionally observed the last three days of Holy Week in the combined offices of Matins and Lauds. Characterized by gradually increasing darkness, Tenebrae provides an especially effective means for worshippers to participate in the events of salvation from the Last Supper to Christ's entombment. Excerpts from the Lamentations of Jeremiah constitute a major portion of the lessons for these three days. Jennifer's degree project focuses specifically on two settings of the Lamentations, one by Thomas Tallis, and the other by Francois Couperin. Performance practice for music of the Tudor period and for 18th century French sacred music is outlined. Some problems inherent in uncovering "correct" stylistic performance are discussed, along with basic characteristics of each work. One interesting aspect of the Tallis piece is that in all probability no pure liturgical setting existed for its performance. The Tallis "Lamentations" was presented as part of this degree project on April 7, 1982 in Dwight Chapel.

The World Beyond, by Marjo Anderson-Dollhopf

If the proof of the pudding is where it's supposed to be, the measure of an academic program is at least partly in its graduates. Periodically, even an institution as young as the Institute of Sacred Music takes stock of what has happened to those who have left its Great Hall and practice modules, Yale diploma and Institute certificate in hand, dreaming renewal and revitalization of the worship life of America.

An unexpected treasure arrived at the door of 409 Prospect Street last November. Marjo Anderson-Dollhopf (MDiv 1980) was "between jobs" at the exact moment that the Institute needed an Administrative Assistant for six months (See Marjo's account, ff.) In what seemed like a matter of days, she became an indispensable part of the office, fielding every kind of inquiry, writing the career placement newsletter to ISM alumni, conducting her own personal ministry of listening, laughing and gently suggesting to the students who continued to gather in the lounge by her desk. She engineered the questionnaire that was sent to all alumni during the spring, and from which the following material was gathered. As she awaits a parish placement in the Lutheran Church of America, she has taken time to share her impressions of the last six months.

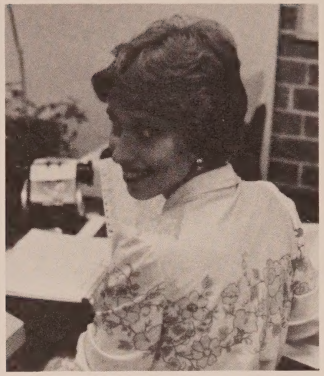
"Today the Institute seems much more certain of its identity and its place in the scheme of things."

This past year has been a most interesting time to be back at the Institute. Many things were the same as they had been when I was here as a student; many things were different. While the faculty had not changed much, all of the students were new to me, the third year students having begun their studies the fall after I had graduated.

During the spring I had the opportunity to meet all the candidates for the position of director and to sit in on the sessions in which the students interviewed the candidates. It was an exciting process, and one which will be continuing over the course of the next year.

Although the Institute has had its share of problems, it has also made some remarkable strides. I think that when I began my studies here in 1977, ISM was in its early adolescent period, just beginning to discover its identity --filled with hopes and dreams, but without the clear focus necessary to pursue its goals. I have noticed a distinct difference since those days. Today the Institute seems much more certain of its identity and its place in the scheme of things. There is more of an integration between music on the one hand, and theology, liturgy, and the arts on the other. Students move comfortably from one area of ministry to another, without projecting the feeling of having to shift gears. They seem to possess a much clearer vision of their role as pastoral musician/artist.

Perhaps some of that integration is due to the popularity of the dual degree program. In 1983, four out of a class of ten graduated with their MM/MAR degrees. Perhaps the integration is due to the increasingly active role that the Religion and Arts program of the Divinity School has played at ISM.



Jonathan Dimmock

Marjo Anderson-Dollhopf, MDiv 1980

Perhaps it is simply due to the faculty and staff who have tenaciously held to their original vision. Whatever the reason, the change is an obvious and welcome one.

Another, subtle change is that the Institute has become much more of a community. Students speak and act not just as individuals, but as part of a group. They offer support to one another; they help each person to develop his/her potential. Perhaps the struggles of the past have caused the Institute to pull together. Perhaps it is the dedication of Jon Bailey, Aidan Kavanagh, Connie Wentzel, and all of the faculty members which has helped meld the various individuals into a larger entity. Perhaps it is the students themselves who have "caught the vision" and clung to it. Whatever the cause, the Institute is now beginning to speak with a single, strong voice.

I think that ISM is now in its late adolescent stage -- almost, but not quite a mature adult. The butterfly has emerged from the cocoon, but has not yet taken off in flight. It is able and ready to fly, but the time is not yet right. The Institute is waiting -- waiting for a permanent director who will guide its flight and lead it in exciting new directions. That needs to happen soon. Hopefully it will happen within the next year.

ANDERSON-DOLLHOPF, Marjo (MDiv 80)
177 Willow Street, New Haven,
CT 06511

Over the course of last summer I became convinced that it was God's will that I resign from my job. I had been working for the past two years at a Lutheran parish in south-central Connecticut as their fulltime pastoral associate and director of music and Christian education. But the congregation was having financial difficulties and there were other problems as well; the situation was not a healthy one. After six months of prayerful deliberation, I resigned. It was not a practical decision by any stretch of the imagination; my husband had just begun fulltime graduate studies and I had no prospects of another job. But I decided to take a leap of faith and act on my conviction.

"Students speak and act not just as individuals, but as part of a group. . .the Institute is now beginning to speak with a single, strong voice."

I spent the next few months doing odd jobs here and there. There were times when I felt I had made the right decision; at other times I felt like a fool. Then there were the times I felt that God was letting me down. It was hard to make ends meet. One day in particular I got angry with God. The muffler had fallen off my car and I had driven home, having resolved not to worry about it until the next day. Sometime in the middle of the night, I awoke, chilled to the bone, to find our furnace had quit working during the night. I dug the quartz heater out of the basement and turned it on. It was broken! Everything was going wrong: the furnace needed a new pump; the car, a whole new exhaust system; I felt as if my life was quickly going down the drain.

The next day, I was to have lunch with a friend who himself had been suffering through a year of unemployment. After I had poured out my troubles to him he said, "Marjo, I just applied for a job, but you need it more than I do. It's at the INSTITUTE OF SACRED MUSIC(!). I

think you should look into it." At first I declined--I knew that he needed the job, too--but in the end, after much prayer, we decided we would both apply and that we would leave the outcome in God's hands. As it turned out, I got the job and my friend got another job several weeks later.

It has been an enjoyable six months. Although I had remained in New Haven after graduation, I had not kept in very close contact with the Institute. So it was a good feeling to "come home." I am grateful for the opportunity I have had this year to serve God in this place. It has not been a perfect year, but it has been a good one. My thanks to the faculty and students who welcomed me and made me a part of their community. And my special thanks to Connie Wentzel who has been not only a terrific supervisor, but a true friend. God's blessings on all of you!

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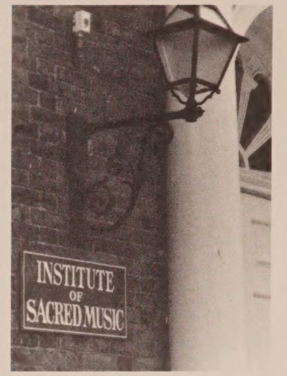
Jonathan Dimmock



Notes and Markings:

President Giamatti has announced the names of the persons who will be serving on the reconstituted search committee to advise him on the Directorship of the Institute of Sacred Music. Under the chairmanship of Professor Jaroslav Pelikan, they include the Dean of the Divinity School, Leander Keck, the Dean of the Music School, Frank Tirro, and Professors Marie Borroff (English Department), Henry Broude (Office of the President), Aidan Kavanagh (ISM), Abraham Malherbe (YDS), and Harold Samuel (YSM).

The committee will be convened early in the fall to reappraise all names submitted for consideration last year and to study new nominations and applications. They will welcome ideas and suggestions, and hope to complete their part of the search process by the end of the first semester.

* * * * * * * * * * * *

An outstanding class of graduates was saluted on the evening of May 22, 1983, at the Institute's Commencement Dinner. Of the ten students receiving degrees, four had earned the Master of Music/Master of Arts in Religion combination: Jonathan Dimmock, Paul Jacobson, Charles Pilling, and Stephen Tappe. James Barry, Thomas Niel, and Adrian Smith completed the Master of Music degree program, Jim in choral conducting and Thom and Adrian in organ. Troy Messenger earned a Master of Arts in Religion with a concentration in Music and Worship. Henry Morris and Catherine Vincie were awarded the Master of Divinity degree.

After Acting Director Aidan Kavanagh had presented Institute Graduation Certificates to each of the departing scholars, special awards were announced. Steven Darsey was named Hugh Giles Scholar, the first year student who has most clearly demonstrated interest, perseverance and achievement. The Hugh Porter award was given to Adrian Smith. Paul Jacobson received the Edwin Stanley Seder Award. The Faculty Prize was given to Charles Pilling and Cathy Vincie, each of whom, in very different but significant ways, achieved work "of a quality that best exemplifies the purposes of the Institute."

The future holds a variety of activities for the members of the class of 1983. Four have already accepted positions as Minister of Music (Jacobson, Pilling, Niel, Tappe). Henry Morris will be a Parish Vicar, Cathy Vincie a college instructor, and Jonathan Dimmock will spend a year as Assistant Organist/Organ Scholar at Westminster Abbey. The others are still negotiating, and a complete report will be included in a future issue of PRISM.

* * * * * * * * * * * *

Looking ahead to the 1983-84 academic year, the Institute community welcomes the leadership of Acting Director Harry Adams, whose appointment was saluted at the Commencement Dinner, which he and Mrs. Adams attended. Johannes Somary will be the Visiting Professor of Choral Conducting, and Gerre Hancock will return to teach organ improvisation. An incoming class of ten will arrive in late August, six in music degree programs and four in YDS degree programs, keeping the balance fairly even between the two schools.

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'We Had to Sacrifice the Woman'

Social and Sexual Forces Between Pulpit and Pew

THOMAS H. TROEGER

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall.
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
All the king's horses and all the king's men
Couldn't put Humpty together again.

✦ THE WOMAN'S voice, a ball of buoyant sound, rolled effortlessly from the pulpit to the last pew of the chapel. Her eyes shone, and conviction animated her body so that her listeners felt a strong personal presence in the pulpit. As Katherine's teacher, I knew that she was trying to develop her own distinctive mode of preaching. In earlier classes she had revealed a great love for the black Baptist tradition in which she was raised. Yet she had also indicated that as a woman with a particular vision of ministry, she would be delivering sermons in a style different from that of the male preachers she had heard. It was a matter not of disowning her roots but of claiming the integrity of her witness.

"Like Humpty Dumpty, our society is in pieces, and it seems that all the king's men and all the king's horses, all our technology and all our knowledge, cannot put us back together again."

The class had responded enthusiastically to Katherine's first sermon, a nurturing message about using our different gifts in the body of Christ. But today's sermon was moving into more troubled waters.

I

"We are in pieces: Republicans and Democrats, conservatives and liberals, men and women, blacks and whites. Today I want to look at just one of those splits, that of blacks and whites."

The issue was a live one in the chapel where Katherine preached: the class consisted of herself, five white women, four black men, and three white men. We were always working hard to help the preacher without imposing our peculiar biases and traditions on the person. So when Katherine signaled that she was going to examine the split between blacks and whites, the atmosphere thickened with the anxiety of confrontation.

"There is a pressure cooker in the ghetto." Katherine's hands began to move together as though she were trying to compress an invisible basketball that kept expanding. "Society keeps trying to pack it down. And although I do not usually consider myself a prophet of future events, I think it is going to blow to pieces in the '80s." Katherine's hands sprang apart as though a coiled spring were released, and we in the pews could feel the energy rushing toward us.

"And yet I believe there is a word of hope. This morning I want to speak about just one thing that we can do to heal the split between blacks and whites. . . . We can preach the gospel."

At this point the sermon became weaker — as Katherine herself later agreed — because it dealt in generalities and preachers' phrases without the bite of specific illustrations. However, as she moved into her conclusion, it became more pointed, naming issues of medical care and housing and employment — all problems that she had encountered in her summer ministries during seminary.

At the end Katherine came out of the pulpit carrying a ball of pink yarn. Saying she wanted to symbolize the hope and unity we had as Christians, she had us toss the ball of yarn among ourselves until we were all holding onto the unwound strand. Then Katherine led us in singing "Bless Be the Tie That Binds." At the end of the song we released the yarn and came forward to share in our response to the sermon, as we do in every class.

II

Susan, a white Unitarian who has been on the front lines for many social causes, responded first: "I just want to say that I loved the sermon. I know that's not a very helpful response. But I did. Maybe it's because I am white, and I need to hear from a black person that there is at least some kind of hope."

Charles, a black Baptist, told first what he liked in the sermon: "Its note of hope — I needed that." Then he shared his reservation: "I am afraid the sermon did not get deep enough into the pain in the ghetto. Maybe the hope came too easily to be real." Charles identified precisely what was weak in the sermon, and his kind manner helped several other class members to share their responses.

But the mood of the class changed when another black student, Leon, said: "I felt the sermon was an attack on the black men in this class when you mentioned the 'sacrifice' involved in preaching the gospel. Blacks have been sacrificing for too long, and it's time for them to be grabbing their share of the pie." I pointed out that, in fairness to Katherine, she was not talking about black people in general but about preachers, black and white alike, needing to preach the social demands of the gospel even when that might not be the popular thing to do. But the vehemence of Leon's next response indicated that we were dealing less with the content of Katherine's sermon than with the rage that fueled his speech. "I am telling you, the sermon was an attack. I felt it as an attack."

Another black student, Richard, now entered the conversation — at first speaking in the same tone as Charles, critical but helpful. "I think I heard what Katherine was trying to do. She was trying to find some hope in a pretty hopeless situation, and that is a hard thing to do. We are talking about men in Buffalo whose hearts have been cut out, children in Atlanta who are disappearing. She mentioned these things, but she didn't deal enough with the existential pain in the situation." His words came haltingly, gingerly, as though he were aware that Leon's anger was hot enough to evaporate whatever anyone said.

At this point, Eleanor, a white Presbyterian, ten years older than Katherine, reached toward her with support. "I appreciated what you were trying to do in the sermon. We do need hope. But I was thinking of some blacks I worked with this summer in my own inner-city parish, and you were right about that pressure cooker. It is ready to explode. I felt that last summer, and I felt it in your hands." Eleanor imitated Katherine's gesture with the invisible basketball. "But maybe Charles is right; you made the hope come too easily to be real."

(Continued on page 124)

Dr. Troeger is professor of preaching and parish at Colgate Rochester/Bexley Hall/Crozer Theological Seminary.

(Continued from page 108)

Eleanor, though her voice was edged with the anxiety that Leon had touched off, was trying to reintroduce Charles's more helpful tone, identifying what was good in the sermon and looking at what needed strengthening.

But Leon did not pick up on the shift in the conversation. He took off from Eleanor's criticism and lashed out, distorting what Katherine had said and missing altogether that she had spoken to the issues of housing and medical care which he mentioned. Leon began to dominate the class. By now, his vocal quality had changed from the full-blooded anger of his earliest response to a more whining, petulant tone. It was as though he had moved from an adult's rage to a child's tantrum. The class, which had enjoyed many healthy arguments in the past, began to retreat into silence, sensing that this time conversation was no longer possible.

Richard, meanwhile, adopted Leon's angry tone. He began: "What the black male members of this class are trying to say is . . ." I pointed out that not all the black members of the class were saying the same things. One had been silent throughout. Another, Charles, had spoken earlier but had become quiet.

III

Our time was up, and people were off to other classes and appointments, except for Katherine, who stayed behind to view the videotape of her sermon. She was devastated. She had preached a good sermon that did, as she acknowledged, need to deal more with the struggle in the ghetto. But this weakness in the message was not enough to account for the disproportionate anger of the reaction. Other students had preached similar sermons with similar weaknesses, but none had awakened this kind of ranting.

What had happened?

Something primordial had come out in the all-consuming petulance that marked the closing minutes of class. I shared with Katherine the substance of a Conant lecture that Nancy French had delivered last winter.

Women in positions of authority, said French, are apt to awaken the preverbal relationship with mother. So long as they are supportive and nurturing — as Katherine was in her first sermon — those who follow them are grateful. But if the woman authority figure challenges rather than soothes, calling for sacrifice, the listeners may respond from a child's sense of having been denied gratification. Ostensibly they will deal with what was said, but in tone and manner they will reveal that the controlling emotional reality is the relationship to mother. They will be speaking as more than isolated individuals. They will be giving expression to undercurrents of thought and feeling that are rumbling through the whole group. Hence, the class response and even Katherine's sermon revealed forces greater than the motions of their individual psyches.

When I shared this idea with Katherine, she began to recover from her devastation and to analyze some of the responses of the class. "They weren't even talking about what I said. I sensed that, but I didn't know what was going on." We then looked again at her sermon for clues. The nursery rhyme and the pink yarn stood out in bold relief. Katherine, eager to develop her own style, had drawn on symbols from the feminine world that intensified the subconscious

Liturgy constitutes that vital inner rhythm of Word and Sacrament which from the beginning has been the very pulse of the Church.

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Horton Davies, D.Phil., D.Litt., Oxon, Henry W. Putnam Professor of the History of Christianity, Princeton University

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response in terms of a child's relationship to mother, with its explosive ambiguities of gratification and denial. Leon and Richard had in turn reacted with the childish vocal quality and fractious ranting that went beyond their comprehensible adult anger.

Leon confirmed this analysis when I walked into the dining hall for a cup of coffee. He stood up and said: "Well, are you going to give me 15 lashes?"

"I'm not in the business of giving people lashes. Why do you think I ought to be doing that to you?"

"Because of what happened in class."

"And what was it that happened in class today?"

"Oh, a lot of things were going on."

"Yes, I think a lot of things were going on. And I think we need to talk about them."

Leon agreed. That afternoon he came by my office and we talked. This time there was no child speaking but the sharp, adult intelligence that I had come to respect in Leon. He spoke to me man to man — and I use those words deliberately. He told me about his work in a prison, how "pink yarn won't tie those bitter men together," and how hurt he had been that Katherine had not dealt adequately with the fierce pain he felt about what happens to black people in prison and on the streets of the ghetto. I told Leon that if he had spoken as directly out of his experience in class and with the same passionate but mature voice, Katherine and everyone else would have heard him. I shared with him the analysis of sexual forces I had discussed with Katherine. Leon was skeptical about it, but at the end of our conversation he came back to it on his own, even though he denied its truth.

IV

During the week I had several conversations with students and with three black colleagues, trying to understand more fully what had happened. At our next class period I brought to the lecture session our current pastor-in-residence, a superb black preacher who had the respect of the entire class. We had talked extensively about what had happened earlier, and he knew the incident would probably come up in the course of his presentation on prophetic preaching. It did. First, a white male and later Katherine raised the issue, pointing out that she had tried to take a strong stand for justice, and we all knew what had happened to her. She wanted ideas on how to handle herself in the future.

The pastor took Katherine's question seriously, pointing out that since he was not a woman he could not speak precisely to her experience, but indicating that he had often received virulent responses that were disproportionate to the sermon that set them off. He talked about "living through the pain" of those reactions and trying to understand the deeper realities that had been hooked in his listeners. Because the pastor, a black male, had addressed Katherine's question seriously, it was now a topic open to the entire class across racial lines. I built on his remarks and outlined the nature of the preverbal response pattern that seemed to have been touched off in class.

When I finished, Richard nodded his head in agreement and said, "Yes, I think some of that is true, that stuff from Nancy French. I think the little boy did come out in me, and I colluded with Leon and we became a little bit like a tribe, and we had to sacrifice the woman." These words in print do not convey the tone of self-realization and genuine apology that now marked Richard's voice, nor do they describe the feeling of relief that pervaded the class as Richard's acknowledgment lifted the load of gloom.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

The Small Church

A *Reflectime* with Dr. Carl S. Dudley

February 23-26, 1981

Family Ministries

A *Reflectime* with Dr. Margaret M. Sawin

March 9-12, 1981

Paul's *Letter to the Romans*

A *Reflectime* with Dr. J. Christiaan Beker

March 23-26, 1981

Evangelism in a Presbyterian Church

A *Reflectime* with Dr. John R. Hendrick

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"There was more to it than that though," continued Richard. "There was the fact that Katherine had not realized fully enough the pain we feel about what is happening in the ghetto, and there was the reaction of the entire class as Leon and I began to attack Katherine. Eleanor [the white Presbyterian woman] bonded with Katherine to give her female support in the face of the attack of us males. Others retreated into silence, following the pattern of fight-flight that we learned in Professor Ashbrook's course last year. Afraid of the way we had identified ourselves as the 'black males,' the rest of the class did not dare to come to Katherine's aid. It was wrong, but we got caught up in it, and there was no way to stop it, at least not just then."

While Richard was speaking, the entire class nodded their heads, each affirming the accuracy of Richard's remarks. His words were like an exorcism, naming the demon that had pervaded the class and thus driving it out and freeing us to understand what had happened.

V

Several weeks later, I was still talking with students and reflecting on the primordial sexual forces between pulpit and pew. I have certainly had people attack my preaching, but never have I received quite the irrational, petulant treatment that is sometimes given to women and that I observed firsthand in Katherine's case. *We had to sacrifice the woman.* I cannot get Richard's words out of my head. They make me see why people balk at feminist theology, inclusive language and women preachers.

The resistance runs deeper than a well-reasoned theological position. It is grounded in the relationship to mother. I do not say this as someone eager to be labeled "a Freudian" or wanting to point the finger at dear old mom and blame all our ills on how we were weaned and toilet-trained. But the intensity of reaction, in women and men alike, indicates that the feminist transformation of theology will have to work at even profounder levels than language and mythology. As important as these are, they remain verbal, and the resistance is coming from preverbal experience.

Yes, language and liturgy, mythology and images must change, but when people fight these changes, it will not be adequate to argue back at a rational level. The tighter knots in the soul will have to be untangled. And that means the final locus of the transformation will be in communities of men and women who care enough about each other to stay together even when the sexual forces erupt in devastating ways. Nothing less than a commitment to the Truth who is greater than all the compacted powers of our psyches can make such a community possible. In the preaching class it was the students' common loyalty to God that by a hairbreadth kept them from giving up on one another.

The assumption of authority by women in our churches is a test of our claim that there is "neither male nor female but all are one in Christ." Is this merely theological cotton candy or the steel twine of reality? If we run from the explosive sexual forces between pew and pulpit and glibly say, "Oh sure, I accept women in the ministry – I see no problems," then we will be fooling ourselves, and we will fail to see the revelations that God is making through the feminist movement.

Seminary classes and church study groups that jump on people when they resist changes in language and metaphor instead of probing where that resistance is coming from will not establish a community where there is justice regardless of sex. But if women and men together look at the recesses of their souls, trusting in the One from whom no secrets are hid, then the light will shine, and they will grow toward "mature adulthood, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." □

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REPORT

OF

THE ELDERS TASK FORCE ON INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

TO

THE 1981 UFMCC GENERAL CONFERENCE

UNIVERSAL FELLOWSHIP OF METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCHES

Elders' Task Force On Inclusive Language

30th April 1981

Dear Friends in Christ–

The Elders' Task Force On Inclusive Language was called into being at the June 1979 meeting of the Board of Elders as recorded in the following excerpt from the minutes:

> In order to reverse what we perceive to be a potentially unhealthy trend of polarization on the issue of inclusive language, the Board of Elders will appoint an "Elders' Task Force" to report to the Elders and to the General Conference of 1981, with the mandate: (1) To research, discuss and propose to the Fellowship a definition of inclusive language, its parameters, and guidelines for appropriate usage in the life and worship of UFMCC churches. The method of that research will include the grass-roots study method used by the Commission on Faith, Fellowship and Order in the development of the six questions, soliciting input from every local congregation, district and member of UFMCC congregations. (2) To apply that research and those guidelines to the UFMCC Statement of Faith as found in the UFMCC By-laws; and to submit these findings and make recommendations to General Conference in 1981.

The establishment of the Task Force was presented to the 9th General Conference in the Elders' white paper and was approved by that conference.

The Task Force began work after the Los Angeles General Conference, over the phones and through the mail. Following the grass-roots model, input was requested from churches, districts, commissions, etcetera. We met in Washington D.C. from 21st to 25th July 1980 to draft our initial report. That report was circulated in October 1980 throughout the Fellowship for feedback. The various suggestions for revision were considered and this final report was drawn up at a meeting of the Task Force in Detroit in March of 1981. This report is being circulated for study and feedback in preparation for the General Conference.

Every attempt has been made to get as much input as possible from throughout UFMCC. In addition to the two hour committee-of-the-whole discussion during the business meeting, time is being set aside during the conference for individuals and groups to meet with the Task Force to discuss the report. Time has been allotted for these discussions to take place both before the Wednesday business meeting's committee-of-the-whole and between that meeting and the Friday vote. We are attempting to give you every opportunity to help us make the report as good and as acceptable as possible. If you wish to meet with us, please let me know so I can draw up a schedule.

Please note that the report will be voted on in two sections:

Section I: Recommendations 1 to 14 will require majority support for adoption as UFMCC's recommendations. Please remember you are not voting to approve the examples. They are provided only in an attempt to clarify the recommendations.

Section II: The recommended By-law changes require a 2/3 vote for adoption.

Enclosed also is a partial list of those individuals, churches, etcetera who have provided input to the Task Force.

Thank you for your suggestions and support.

s/s Rev. Brent Hawkes

Reverend Brent Hawkes
Chairperson

Please send all responses to:

MCC Toronto
730 Bathurst Street
Toronto, Ontario M5S-2R4

In addition to task force members, input from within UFMCC has been received from the following:

DISTRICT CONFERENCES

Mid-Atlantic District
Northeast District
South Atlantic District
South Central District
Mid-Central District
Southeast District
Canadian District

CHURCHES

MCC Galveston
MCC Waterloo
MCC Portland
MCC San Francisco
MCC East Bay
MCC Toronto
MCC Vancouver
MCC Detroit
MCC Houston
MCC Illiamo
MCC Boulder
MCC New York
MCC Miami Beach
MCC Memphis (Board of Directors)

INDIVIDUALS

Rev. Elder John Hose
Rev. Elder Troy Perry
Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson
Rev. Reid Christensen
Rev. Jeffrey Pulling
Rev. Marge Ragona
Rev. Brenda Cisneros-Hunt
Rev. Howard Wells
Ms. Rhea Miller
Mr. Robert Parker
Mr. Michael Jefferis
Ms. Linda Lopez
Ms. Margaret Trotter
Mr. Adam DeBaugh
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Rev. Charles Larsen
Rev. Claudia Vierra
Rev. Candace Naisbitt
Rev. Marshall Williams
Rev. Dee Lamb
Rev. Gerald Motto
Rev. Jane Carl

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE TASK FORCE

INTRODUCTION TO GUIDELINES

The inclusive language task force was created to deal with the issue of language. Language, however, is not so simple a matter as it might first appear. How we speak about something not only describes the experience, but often shapes and creates it. The power and significance of language, words, the word, was clearly understood by the authors of Scripture who identified the act of creation with God's Word, God's speaking. The imagery of God's interaction with humanity is consistently expressed in terms of God's Word or speaking. The early prohibition against uttering God's name was a recognition of the power that a name or word holds. Indeed God's delegating to humanity the authority to name the birds and animals was an act of empowerment. Thus, when we deal with language in general, and God language in particular, we are venturing into an area of the deepest significance, and it is important that we proceed with care and with caution.

At the same time, both the Biblical tradition and the history of the faith community reveal that the one constant in God language is that of change. And how could it be otherwise? For it is a living God whom we worship and respond to. Both as individuals and as communities our understanding and experience of this God grows as we grow, and growth inevitably brings change.

The Bible in its present form evolved over a period of many centuries. Beginning as stories of faith passed on by word of mouth from generation to generation, these stories were eventually written down and added to. Different generations of faith communities shaped, edited, and retold these stories in light of their own understanding and experience of God. Still other communities later on discussed and debated which stories and which versions would be included as scripture and which would not. (The fact that even today, the Jews, the catholics, and the protestants all have slightly different scriptures vividly demonstrates that different perspectives have led communities to different determinations of God's Word.)

It is not surprising then, that we, in our age, following the tradition of our forebears in the faith, are retelling and reshaping the great stories of faith in light of our own experience and our own understanding of that same living God.

Such a restatement is a particular hallmark of any prophetic age, when God calls us into wider understandings of old truths and relationships in light of changing events and experience. It was afterall, the reformulation of the faith by the prophets in response to the destruction of Israel that renewed that faith. It was the restatement of the law in the life and teachings of Jesus that fulfilled that law. It was the re-interpretation of who is the faith community by Paul that laid the foundation for an inclusive and universal church.

Any such change is also accompanied by tremendous resistance and hostility by those who seek to be loyal to the old formulations. Religious institutions and leaders in particular are susceptible to this form of blindness. Jesus' complaint that the people who loudly proclaim their veneration of the prophets of old are the same people who are stoning the prophets in their midst, is no less a problem in our own age.

If we can be certain that God is asking each of us to change in our understanding, we can be less certain as to the direction of that change. Is a new direction the leading of a living God or is it a turning away from the path that God has set before us? This, of course, is always the crucial question. For in our struggle together as a community, the debate is never between those who say we should follow the Word of God and those who say we should not – how easy that would be: but rather between those who have differing understandings of what in fact is God's Word for us. Since we know that our knowledge and our prophecy is imperfect, we cannot pretend that any of our beliefs, no matter how deeply held, are final or error-free formulations. How then do we approach change? It seems that we must always ask the same question. Does the intended change lead to a richer, deeper, more faithful understanding and experience of the God we have met in our own lives as well as in the testimony of the communities of faith throughout the ages, or does it lead to some diminished or self-serving view? This question does not always yield an immediate answer, but at least it delivers us from the meaningless spectacle of shouting Bible verses at one another and pretending that such a futile exercise is true reflection and examination.

In approaching the question of inclusive language, we need to consider the nature of the change that would take place. For what is being proposed is not merely a cosmetic change to politically mollify vociferous factions in our midst, but rather a different way of thinking, understanding, and speaking about God. Is that way a richer, deeper, more faithful one, or a diminished and self-serving one?

The members of the inclusive language task force, though representing diverse cultural and theological perspectives, are united in believing the guidelines here presented will enrich rather than diminish our faith experience. For the changes that these guidelines represent are in the interest of enlarging and expanding our understanding and experience of God. By no longer identifying God with words or concepts primarily or exclusively associated with one gender, one race, one group, we more faithfully witness to the nature of a God who is not limited to one gender, one race, or one group.

The fact that such a change is neither familiar nor comfortable for many of us does not mean that we need not expend the effort. Allowing our lives to be transformed by the power of God often involves our submitting to changes that we initially resist. The fact that such a change requires our learning to restate the traditional formulations of our faith in light of God's present Word is no less than other communities of faith have had to do before us. Indeed, to be part of such an emerging restatement of God's Word is not a burden, but a sacred privilege.

PREAMBLE

The reason we need to find and use inclusive language in our church life has been widely misunderstood. Inclusive language has often been urged upon congregations on grounds that the use of traditional, non-inclusive language upsets and angers some who then avoid the church. As Christians we need to be concerned about the feelings of others; however, if the only reason we use inclusive language is that it keeps some people from getting upset, then what of those who find the use of inclusive language disturbing because of its unfamiliarity? The principle which guides the life and practice of the church cannot be 'what do most people find comfortable,' but rather, 'what is God's will and purpose.' The reason we need to use inclusive language is not because we want to keep a particular group happy, but because it is necessary to promote justice, reconciliation and love, the agenda to which we Christians have been called.

Because of human sin, we live in a world of division and oppression. Groups which have traditionally exercised control over other groups inevitably and often unconsciously seek to preserve that superior status by denying the same access to power and privilege to others that they themselves enjoy. Such denial may be blatant in the form of discriminatory laws or customs, or it may be hidden but even more potent in the form of oppressive concepts or language. The insidious nature of language which serves to emphasize one group as the norm or standard is that it reinforces that group's primacy and importance every time we think or speak, thus, it becomes automatic or 'natural' to ascribe greater weight to that group. Justice, reconciliation and love demand that we overcome oppression wherever it exists, and we cannot exclude the oppressive structures of our language from this task.

The use of inclusive language does more than overcome a barrier to equal access. It frees us to apprehend and convey the wider truth. Paul urges the Corinthians to widen their hearts that they might fully experience the gospel (II Cor. 6:13). In the same spirit, he might urge us to widen our understanding so that we might better grasp the richness and fullness of God as well as of our own humanity. It is our openness to move beyond comfortable and familiar images that enables us to grow in our relationship with God. The importance of inclusive language is that it serves to liberate everyone.

SECTION I

1. What is inclusiveness?
   Inclusiveness is an attitude or stance of mutuality and openness towards others that recognizes everyone's right of equal access to the experience and realization of wholeness, and it is a commitment to remove barriers between individuals and among communities that deny such access.

2. What is inclusive language?
   Inclusive language reflects an attitude or stance of mutuality and openness towards others that recognizes everyone's right of equal access to the experiences and realization of wholeness.
   Inclusive language reflects a sensitivity to overcome barriers that exist between individuals and among communities in such areas as gender, race, class, age, physical differences, nationality, theological beliefs, culture and lifestyle.

3. Guidelines for inclusive language regarding gender:
   a. References to people:
      i) Use nongendered terms or inclusive gendered terms when referring to all sexes.
      ii) Pronouns should not be of a single gender when referring to all sexes.
      iii) Terms for occupations and roles should not refer to one gender.

   b. Inclusive language for God:
      i) Use nongendered or inclusive gendered terms for God wherever such changes do not alter the fundamental meaning. If a gendered term is used, terms of the other gender should be used for balance.
      ii) Balance males images for God with female images.
      iii) Where possible, replace pronouns with nongendered nouns or use balanced gendered pronouns or words such as 'who,' 'whom,' 'one,' and 'Godself.'

   c. Inclusive language for Jesus the Christ:
   The historical person, Jesus, was male. The historical fact that Jesus was male affirms not that God chose to become incarnate with masculine characteristics, but that Jesus is fully human as well as fully divine. And because Jesus incorporates the humanity of both men and women, it is appropriate to emphasize the full humanity rather than primarily the maleness of Jesus.

   d. The task force recommends as options the use of direct address, adjectives and verbs to replace nouns or pronouns in dealing with inclusive language, carefully considering whether meaning or purpose would be adversely changed.

4. Guidelines for inclusive language regarding race:
   If we are indeed going to be an inclusive church, we must acknowledge that we are the product of our past. Incorporated within our Christian religious heritage is a long history of racism (conscious and unconscious). Racism, whether conscious or unconscious, is destructive and must be overcome in order for us to be whole in our Christian faith. So, in keeping with our guidelines for inclusivity, we strongly recommend the elimination of racist language, imagery and symbols in references to people, God, Jesus Christ, scripture, hymns, songs, liturgy and contemporary language.

   > "The paradox of Chrisitanity is that what is wisdom to reason is foolishness to God, and what seems foolish or irrational to reason is the true wisdom that leads to redemption. The darkness from which reason flees is the true path to truth and being. This is the constant teaching of the scriptures. The greatest redemptive acts in the history of salvation were done at night or in darkness: the first creation, the night of the Exodus, the night of the incarnation, the night of the Last Supper, the night of the Resurrection. There is no other way to life, truth and being but through the positive darkness of Faith." (page 162-3, *The Dark Center: A Process Theology of Blackness*, Bulalia Baltazar, Paulist Press, New York 1973.)

   The task force had a problem dealing with the separation of the issues of pigmentation (white, black) and illumination (light, dark). Because of its racism, society has so strongly interwoven the two. In a technical and a theological sense they are indeed separate issues whereas, in their practical application, they are often combined. We need to be especially mindful of how we use terms of lightness and darkness.

5. The task force recommends that inclusive language be introduced in membership classes of local congregations as an area of discussion and education.

6. The task force recommends that these guidelines be applied at all levels of the life of UFMCC, both in written, visual and spoken form, on the local, national and international levels.

7. The task force recommends that all UFMCC functions at the local, national and international level, all participants, to include outside guests, be informed of these guidelines.

8. The task force recommends that the UFMCC Department of Christian Education revise and develop materials using these guidelines, including production of a packet and study for use in studying inclusive language.

9. The task force recommends that the UFMCC commission a body to search out and supply inclusive scriptures that incorporate these guidelines. In the meantime, great care should be taken in applying these guidelines to scripture.

10. The task force recommends to the Clergy Credentials and Concerns Committee that it develop procedures for evaluating candidates for licensure in relation to inclusive language. These procedures must be specifically approved by General Conference.

11. The task force recommends that these guidelines be applied to the work of the Hymnody Committee.

12. The task force recommends that UFMCC use the name of the month and day in giving dates, since order varies among countries when only numerals are used (eg. 6/2/80 can be June 2 or February 6). Also, seasonal references should be eliminated, and months used instead (eg. not 'Fall Session' but 'September Session').

SECTION II

13. Recommendations for Statement of Faith:
UFMCC By-laws, Article III: Doctrine, Sacraments and Rites.

A. Doctrine: Christianity is the revelation of God in Jesus Christ and is the religion set forth in the scriptures. *Jesus Christ is foretold in the Old Testament, presented in the New Testament, and proclaimed by the Christian Church in every age and in every land.*

Founded in the interest of offering a church home to all who confess and believe, the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches moves in the mainstream of Christianity.
Our Faith, is based upon the principles outlined in the historic creeds: Apostels' and Nicene.

We believe:

1. *In one triune God, omnipresent and omniscient, of one substance and of three persons: God - our Parent-Creator; Jesus Christ the only begotten Son of God, God in flesh, human; and the Holy Spirit - God as our Sustainer.*

2. That the Bible is the divinely inspired Word of God, showing forth God to every person through the law and the prophets, and finally, completely and ultimately on earth in the being of Jesus Christ.

3. That Jesus...the Christ...historically recorded as living some 2,000 years before this writing, *is God incarnate, of human birth, fully God and fully human, and that by being one with God,* Jesus has demonstrated once and forever that all people are likenwise Children of God, being spiritually made in God's image.

4. That the Holy Spirit is God making known God's love and interest to all people. The Holy Spirit is God, available to and working through all who are willing to place their welfare in God's keeping.

5. Every person is justified by Grace to God through faith in Jesus Christ.

6. We are saved from lonliness, despair and degradation through God's gift of grace, as was declared by our *Saviour.* Such grace is not earned, but is a pure gift from a God of pure love. We further commend the *community* of the faithful to a life of prayer; to seek genuine forgiveness for unkind, thoughtless and unloving acts; and to a committed life of Christian service.

Lord/Lady

2- theol. change

25- dark/light imagery

7. The Church serves to bring all people to God through Christ. To this end, it shall arrange for regular services of worship, prayer, interpretation of the Scriptures, and edification through the teaching and preaching of the Word.

B. Sacraments: This church embraces two holy Sacraments:

1. Baptism by water and the Spirit, as recorded in the Scriptures, shall be a sign of the dedication of each life to God and God's service. Through the words and acts of this sacrament, the recipient is indentified as God's own child.

2. Holy Communion is the partaking of blessed bread and fruit of the vine in accordance with *the words of Jesus*, our Sovereign: "This is my body...this is my blood." (Matthew 26:26-28.) All who believe, confess and repent and seek God's love through Christ, after examing their consciences, may freely participate in the communal meal, signifying their desire to be received into *community with Jesus Christ*, to be saved by *Jesus Christ's* sacrifice, to participate in *Jesus Christ's* resurrection, and to commit their lives anew to *the service of Jesus Christ.*

IMPLEMENTATION

Adopting the task force guidelines and recommendations mean that they become the official policy of UFMCC. As is the case with other official policy, the implementation is the responsibility of each affected body.

In light of the tremendous variance in current practice on this matter, we recognize the need for flexibility in acheiving full use of these guidelines in our various communities.

We embrace the spirit of the report and pledge to make efforts to implement the letter of the report as quickly as local conditions permit.

Moved by the Rev. Jennie Boyd Bull, the Rev. Howard Wells, seconded by the Rev. Brank Hawkes and the Rev. Karen Ziegler:

Because we are the priesthood of all believers, and because we are committed to Christian education with UFMCC, it is our Christian joy and responsibility to encourage broad examination of theological issues in this Fellowship. Therefore, the General Conference instructs the Faith, Fellowship and Order Commission to report to General Conference, in 1983 with the following mandate:

1. To research, discuss and propose to the Fellowship a Statement of Faith, using Article III of the UFMCC By-laws as its starting point. This process will include the grass roots study method and development of study questions. soliciting input from clergy and laity in every congregation, district, church extension areas and members of UFMCC congregations.

2. To, in particular, apply that research to theological implications of any linguistic changes in the Statement of Faith as adopted at General Conference 1981.

3. To develop and disseminate study questions to be considered as UFMCC develops a Christian theology of sexuality.

The work of this task force is but one step in an ongoing process. The issue is not dead nor resolved. A step has been taken.

Respectfully Submitted:

Elders' Task Force on Inclusive Language

Rev. Brent Hawkes (chair), MCC Toronto, Ontario, Canada (*) (**)
Rev. Willie White, St. John's MCC, Raleigh, NC, USA (*) (**)
Lei Garcia, MCC of the Rockies, Denver, CO, USA (*)
Rev. Shelly Hamilton, MCC Manhattan, NY, USA (*) (**)
Rev. Edward Hougen, MCC Boston, MA, USA (*) (**)
Annette Beall, MCC of the Resurrection, Houston, TX, USA (*)
Rev. Delores Berry, MCC Baltimore, MD, USA (*) (**)
Rev. Jose Mojica, UFMCC (**)

(*) attended composition of draft report
(**) attended composition of final report

Educator -

corporate Expression of community - act of faith
/ Wide range of Xtian exp.
Meant as group experience

2 emphases -

1. Call of MCC to be what it is.
Witness of God's love not bound by trad. barriers.
Gay/Lesb
Vision expanding / racial / class / nat'l barriers

2. Gen'l Conf directive

4. Implement guidelines.

Creator -
Sustainer
Rock
M/F
Parent
F.
HS
I Am

METHODS

1. Choose inclusive hymns.
2. Eliminate 1 verse
3. Change words / not change meaning /

Adam and Eve: a story for all time

By Jeffrey D. Pulling

THE STORY OF Adam and Eve in Genesis 2 - 3 has usually been interpreted in very narrow and oppressive ways. It has been used to stifle all other explanations of how this world came to be. It has been used to oppress women. And it has been used to justify human exploitation and rape of the natural world. None of these was the intent of the Yahwist author, who was a feminist and ecologist way ahead of his time, and who told a mythic story to explain what had gone wrong with God's beautiful creation.

The Hebrew way of expressing what went wrong with God's original intentions for humankind and the rest of the world was to tell a story. In Genesis 2 - 3 we have a story that uses mythical language and concepts.

Now by "mythical", I do not mean untrue, false, or misleading. Myth means symbolic language, and it explains not how *things historically happened, but why* things happened as they did, how did we get to our present situation, what is the *meaning* of what happened, and why are we like the way we are now. Adam and Eve are representatives of our ancestors, the first humans or the original humanity. Their very names are representative or symbolic, as we shall see as we get into the story. The story of Adam and Eve is the story of all humankind. Their story is not limited to the first generation of humankind; it is true for all generations. The story of Adam and Eve is true, in that it speaks of the condition of all people. Their story is true in explaining how God created the world and how we humans perverted it.

Some of the basic human questions that the second creation story found in Genesis 2 - 3 seeks to answer are: What is the reason for the unrest and the uneasiness in my very being? Why am I troubled and torn within? Why do I feel estranged from the rest of the world, from the earth, from the animals, even from other people? We are all part of this world; why do I feel separated and cut off from everything else? Is it because I have lost touch with the God who created all of this? What would it be like to know this God and to live with this God?

The original humans are depicted as living in a paradise of sorts. It was not a spiritual, "heavenly" paradise, but a very earthly one. They lived with all the rest of creation, and they were given a special role to play, as caretakers of the garden. They were given responsibility by their Creator to govern and oversee the world wisely. By their act of disobedience they did not "fall" from some spiritual realm or union with God. Rather they were ejected from their earthly paradise.

This means that there is no supraworldly realm where humankind originally was and to which we essentially belong. Humankind was created to live in this world, in this time and space. The original created state of humankind was wholeness in this world and harmony with all of creation; that was God's intent for humankind. By an act of disobedience, however, humankind became alienated from this world, indeed a stranger to life.

One of the insights of the first creation story (Genesis 1) is that the world is good. God's creation is good. The text is very clear: God looked upon everything that God made, and it was good. The world was created by a good God to carry out God's purposes. This means that nothing in all existence should be regarded as evil in itself. Nothing is inherently or by nature evil. This is the first insight, that God's creation is good, that everything has been created for God's purposes. But something has gone wrong. The world, and the human race in particular, has "screwed up." Something happened to God's good creation.

An important aspect of God's original intention for humankind was complementary equality between men and women. The first creation story clearly states that both men and women are created in the image of God. "So God created humankind in God's own image; in the image of God, God created them; male and female God created them" (Genesis 1:27). The second creation account in Chapters 2 and 3 has usually been interpreted in a very sexist way, with the man Adam created first and the woman Eve taken from him to be his helper. And Adam names Eve, thus exercising authority over her, and God tells them that man shall rule over woman. This is a faulty and dangerous interpretation of the second creation account and does not hold up when we examine the story.

The story of Adam and Eve is one of the best known stories in the Bible, but also one of the most misunderstood. It is true that the story is ambiguous at points, and people have interpreted it in a variety of ways, usually to reinforce what they already believe about human nature. I maintain, however, that we are in effect denying Biblical authority and inspiration if we go to the Bible with our minds

already made up about something and we search there for reinforcement of our views. If we really believe that the Bible records the Word of God to our world, then we will let it speak to us.

With this in mind, let us approach Genesis 2 - 3 again and look at it in a fresh way. Let us re-read this Hebrew story which was told to explain what went wrong with God's good creation, how humans perverted the goodness of God's created order, how humans have fallen short of the life for which God created them.

O

The second creation story actually starts at verse 4b of chapter 2. The first act of creation here is the creation of the human being (2:7), and Yahweh God puts the human in the garden to "till it and keep it" (2:15). By this responsibility and by being allowed to name the animals, humankind is set over the rest of creation. Humans are to govern affairs on earth in God's name, and the assumption is that they would govern responsibly, acting like Yahweh would.

I say that the first act of creation is that of "humankind", and not of "man", because that is what the Hebrew words in this story suggest. "Adam" or *adham* is the first creature that God made. In Hebrew, *adham* is the generic word for "humankind". There is also a play on words here because *adham* was formed from the ground which is *adhamah*.

Also in this story, however, "Adam" is the name of the first man, the primordial male. How do we know which way to translate it? Most translators take the easy way out by always rendering it "man", to mean both humankind in general and male. For those of us for whom this is unsatisfactory (it is both sloppy and sexist), the Hebrew text gives us some help.

Before the creation of woman in 2:21-23, only the generic word *adham* is used. There is no exlusive male reference. Only with the creation of woman *(ishshah)* occurs the first specific term for male *(ish)*. In other words, sexuality is simultaneous for woman and man. The sexes are interrelated and interdependent. Man as male does not precede woman as female but happens concurrently with her. Thus the first act of creation in this story is the creation of undifferentiated humanity (2:7), and the last act of creation is that of sexuality, of male and female.

The creation of male and female human beings is the completion of creation, just as it is in the first creation account (1:26-28). There is no reason to infer that woman is secondary or inferior because she was created after man, almost as an afterthought. In the first place, this is not so; male and female are simultaneous. Secondly, there is nothing wrong or inferior with being created last. In Genesis 1 the creation of humankind, male and female, is the very last act and is viewed as the culmination. God's crowning touch. So it is with the second story, too.

Some have maintained that woman is inferior to man because she was created to be his helper. Genesis 2:18, "Then Yahweh God said, 'It is not good that adham should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.' "

The Hebrew word for helper is *ezer*, and it can be used in a variety of ways. Here in Genesis 2 it refers to the animals and to woman. Elsewhere in the Old Testament it can be the proper name for a male ((1 Chronicles 4:4; 12:9; Nehemiah 3:19). There are also some passages in which *ezer* describes God (Psalms 121:2; 124:8; 146:5; 33:20; 115:9-11; Exodus 18:4; Deuteronomy 33:7, 26, 29). Yahweh is viewed as the helper (*ezer*) of Israel, and in this capacity Yahweh creates and saves.

Thus *ezer* is a relational term; it designates a beneficial relationship, and it can refer to God, people, or animals. Here in Genesis 2, what Yahweh desires is a helper fit for *adham*. The word "fit" (*neged*) connotes *equality*, a counterpart of *adham*. The animals are helpers but they fail to *fit "adham"*. There is some physical rapport between *adham* and the animals because Yahweh formed them both out of the ground. Yet their similarity is not equality, because *adham* names them and thereby exercises power over them. No fit helper is found among the animals. And so the narrative moves on to woman, who is the helper equal to man. Thus *ezer*, far from suggesting an inferior status for woman, is a clear indication of man and woman being equal counterparts.

Some Biblical interpreters have taught an inferior status for woman because she was formed from the rib of *adham*. This is also an unsubstantiated assessment. For both man and woman, it is Yahweh alone who creates. Man had no part in making woman; he is in a deep sleep. Man exercises no control over woman's existence. He is not a director or consultant at her birth. Woman, like man, owes her life solely to God. For both of them the origin of life is a divine mystery.

The woman is in fact equal to man. He *calls* her "woman", which is a descriptive term which designates gender. He does not name her, which is in contrast to *adham's* relationship with the animals. *Adham* does name the animals and thus exercises dominion and responsibility over them. Those who know the rest of this second creation story will, of course, point out that in Genesis 3:20 that the man does name the woman "Eve", but notice that this is *after their disobedience and their judgment by God*. Woman and man were created equals. Neither has authority over the other. And chapter 2 ends (vs. 25), and they "were both naked, and they were not ashamed."

As we move in chapter 3, we encounter the serpent in verse 1. The serpent has often been interpreted as a demon or as the Devil himself, but there is no indication in the text itself that this is so. The serpent in verse 1 is not a demon whose origin owed nothingt to God, but was one of the wild animals which Yahweh had made, a fellow creature. The serpent is portrayed as a subtle liar who misleads the woman in telling her that by eating of the forbidden tree she and her husband would be like God, knowing good and evil. This was, in effect, a lie because the real result would be alienation from God and misery.

The terminology used here, "the knowledge of good and evil", has puzzled many. What is wrong with the knowledge of good and evil? This is what most ethical systems are based upon: knowing good and evil, and thus being able to choose one's course of action accordingly. Why was this tree forbidden? Why did eating from it wreck human life? Part of the answer stems from disobeying God. By disobeying the specific command of God, the humans cut themselves off from God. But why was it forbidden in the first place? What was wrong with eating this fruit?

The answer is clear: eating of this tree stems from a human desire to be "like God." In itself this is a right and reasonable desire. The later command, "You shall be holy, for I Yahweh your God am holy" (Leviticus 19:2), makes it clear that humans have the potential to become like God *in character*. This likeness comes through submission to God's will.

The serpent, however, tells the woman that likeness to God is to be achieved by defiance of God's command,

and that the likeness to God which is within human reach is in terms of *power*, not character. The serpent suggests that the humans can make themselves the equal of God. This is what is wrong with "knowing good and evil." It is a human attempt to order life, to make choices, and to determine what is the right course, all without God. It is an attempt to define right and wrong without reference to God. God's will alone determines what is right and wrong, and what is good and evil. The first humans tried to bypass this and seize the power of determining good and evil. In other words, they tried to be "God" for themselves, to be their own moral authority. This is why their relationship with God was severed, and this is why everything else in human life became so distorted, because they tried to make it on their own without acknowledging their Creator, the one in whom is their source and their destiny.

The first result of the act of disobedience is described in 3:7. Whereas before they had walked about innocently naked, now they are ashamed of their own bodies and cover them up. This is alienation from one's own body and in particular alienation from one's own sexuality, because the part that is covered up is, of course, the genitals.

There has been much speculation and writing about sexual intercourse as the original sin, and thus sex is forever tainted. I think that this is reading our own hang-ups about sex into the text. That is not in the story itself. Sexuality was created by God and is therefore good (2:18, 22b, 23, 24). "Cleave to" does not mean to hold hands; there is no reservation in speaking openly about sexual relations. Sexuality has been ordained by God for the purpose of companionship. Note that there is no mention of procreation ("multiplying and filling the earth") as is in the first creation story (Genesis 1:28). The purpose of sexuality in this second story is for companionship in the full sense of that word. This sexual relationship, however, became infected with evil when the humans, in their desire for power disobeyed God. The impaired relationship between humankind and God throws the relationship between man and woman into disorder.

So we turn now to the results of this disobedience as recorded in 3:14-19, commonly called the "curses." Note, however, that only the serpent is cursed, but the woman and the man are not. They are judged, and the judgments are commentaries on the disastrous effects of their shared disobedience. They show how terrible and distorted human life has become.

We misunderstand if we take these judgments to be mandates or commands from God. These verses describe the human situation that results from sin; they do not prescribe proper, right human behavior.

Of special concern are the words telling the woman that her husband shall rule over her (3:16b). This statement is not license for male supremacy, but rather it is a condemnation of it. Subjugation and supremacy are perversions of the order God created. Through disobedience the woman has become slave. The man is corrupted also, for he has become master, ruling over the one who is his God-given equal. The subordination of female to male signifies their shared sin.

This sin affects all relationships: between animals and human beings (vs. 15), woman and her body especially in childbirth (vs. 16a), man and woman (vs. 16b), man and the soil (vss. 17, 18), and man and his work (vs. 19). Whereas in creation man and woman know harmony and equality, in sin they experience alienation and discord. Everything is "screwed up". They are ejected from their earthly paradise and from then on they live a life of frustration, pain, and strife. One sign of this resulting alienation is that the man names the woman Eve. By naming her, as *adham* had previously done for the animals, he exercises his control and dominance over her.

The tree of knowledge of good and evil stands throughout human history as a constant temptation to people. Humans are always trying to order their lives and determine what is best for themselves without reference to God. These attempts always distort life, but humans keep trying.

Chapters 4 through 11 tell the subsequent history of humankind also in mythic terms. Everything is perverted. Things go from bad to worse. The alienation which humans feel causes hatred and murder, refusal to listen to God, and attempts to build up power and prestige. Sin is the separation from God that subsequently distorts all of life.

O

Into this historical mess God steps and calls one person, Abraham. Through Abraham and his descendents God works to end this alienation and to bring about reconciliation. This is the story of the Old Testament. This is not the place to elaborate on the rest of the Old Testament, but I do want to point out that the vision that the prophets of Israel had of the new messianic age (the coming day of Yahweh) included a reversal of the judgments in Genesis 3. Isaiah spoke of harmony in the animal world, and between animals and humans (Isaiah 11:6-9). Micah prophesied of reconciliation between the earth and humans, with the consequence that people would not have to eke out a living from the soil but enjoy this world (Micah 4:3-4). Along this same line Amos described a time to come when the earth would bring forth abundantly and people would be able to enjoy the fruits of their previous labors (Amos 9:13-15). Jeremiah made a startling statement about a reversal of the roles of women and men, with women being on top this time (Jeremiah 31:22). Then of course in the New Testament Paul speaks of there being no male or female, no Jew or Gentile, no slave or free, but all being one in Christ (Galatians 3:28).

The second creation story in Genesis 2 - 3 clearly shows that God did not create the world so that there would be alienation, domination, sexism, frustration, pain, etc. These are things that human beings have brought upon themselves. These are "demonic" forces that enslave humans, hold them down, and from which they need to be released. The intention of God for creation is harmony: among humans, between humans and the rest of creation, and within human nature itself. All of this, however, has been warped and distorted by the willfull rebellion of humans.

This sets the stage for all the rest of the Biblical drama that follows. The "fall" of humanity from God's original purposes and God's continuing efforts to restore these purposes is basic to understanding everything else in the Bible. The story of Adam and Eve is the Prologue.

In this Genesis account itself nothing is said about the long-term, lasting consequences of the disobedience of Adam and Eve. They bring these judgments or punishments upon themselves, but their descendants are not mentioned. Adam and Eve, however, are *understood* to be representative figures for all of humankind. That which happened to them happened to all people. Through their disobedience, sin and the tragic consequences of sin came into this world.

O

Adam is the representative figure for the old humanity, that is not Adam the first man, but *adham* the pioneer human

being. In 1 Corinthians 15:45-49 Paul refers to Adam as the first human and to Christ as the second human. "The first human was from the earth, a human of dust; the second human is from heaven. As was the human of dust, so are those who are of the dust. And as is the human of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the human of dust, we shall also bear the image of the human of heaven" (1 Corinthians 15:47-49). Adam symbolizes the old humanity and Christ the new.

In Romans 5:12-21 Paul emphasized that all of us sinned in Adam, the primordial human being. All people are sinners, Paul maintains, but we do not die for our own sins. How do we know that? Because, Paul argues, death reigned even before the time of Moses when the law was given. Even before people could be held accountable for transgressing against the will of God, they were still dying. Thus it is not for our own sins that we are liable to death. We die because we sinned in Adam, because the original representative of humanity disobeyed, and we are all physically members of the old humanity.

What does the primordial human being *adham* have to do with us? The idea of original sin comes into play here. In Paul's argument in Romans 5, it is *not* that all sinned in the same way as Adam; vs. 14 says that "death reigned...even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam..." Neither is Paul saying that we all inherited from Adam the tendency to sin. The point that Paul does make here is that all humans sinned *in* Adam; all literally and actually sinned in Adam.

This concept is foreign to our modern Western minds. Our culture and religions are very individualistic. The Jewish tradition out of which Paul came, like many other cultures and religions, however, emphasized the people as a whole, as a collective unity, rather than as individual persons. If one person sinned, the guilt was laid not just at his or her feet, the whole people to whom that person belonged was treated as guilty. There was real solidarity; what happened to one happened to all.

Then Paul moves to the other side of his argument. Into this world of Adam-identified people Christ came. Just as people were constituted sinners by Adam's sin, now they are constituted righteous by Christ's obedience. The same solidarity that involved humankind in the sin of Adam also involves humankind in the holiness of Christ. The perfect obedience of Christ broke the chain of sin and death. The process which began in Adam of always going towards death and destruction was reversed in Christ. This argument of Paul rests, of course, on the fact that Jesus Christ was fully human (as well as fully divine). The whole argument collapses unless Jesus is as human as Adam. Humans are identified with the sin of Adam just by virtue of their humanity, but they can also be identified with the obedience of Christ.

If we are to be members of the new humanity, we must make a conscious decision to join. We can be in Christ just as we are in Adam, but only if we actually become members of the body of Christ. This means to *identify* with Christ and actually become "Christ" in this world. If we are thus in Christ, what happened to Christ happens also to us, and we rise to new life.

Christ Jesus inaugurated the new, eschatological age by embodying in himself God's intent for all humankind. Here was the "last Adam" who fulfilled the purpose for humanity that was thwarted by the first Adam and who gave new life to those caught up in the destructive ways of the old humanity (1 Corinthians 15:45).

Christ bears the image of God which is a potential in all of us. It is a potential for all of us because we were created with it (Genesis 1:26-27; 5:1-2; 9:6; James 3:7-9). Our self-centered living, however, prohibits the development and expression of this image. Only Christ reflected in and of Himself the image and glory of God, and thus only Christ is true humanity, the kind of humanity for which God created us. It is only by identifying with Christ and thus becoming God-centered, instead of self-centered, that this image of God can come to expression in us. We must become as fully members of the new humanity as we have been of the old humanity.

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The Editor Comments

Contributing Editor Jeffrey Pulling's article is not intended as a point-by-point rebuttal to Karen Ziegler's "Creation Myths: Bridge to Human Wholeness" (TGC, April-May 1979). It *is* intended as an alternative view of the Genesis story/myth. Here are some significant contrasts:

For Ziegler, the "sacred story" is shifting. The old story is inadequate for our time and consciousness. But we need a sacred story, so it is time for a rewrite.

For Pulling, the old (Genesis) story is fully adequate "for all time." That is, it speaks for God's point of view with a timeless accuracy. The Yahwist author of Genesis 2:4b - 3 "was a feminist and ecologist."

For Ziegler, that won't do. "If 'conversion' needs to happen today on a massive scale to accomodate the full humanity of female, black, and homosexual people, and I believe it does," she argues, "somehow we need to relocate our creation stories. And we need to tell some new ones. Meanwhile, we need to defuse and devalue Genesis 1 - 3."

Pulling points to linguistic evidence that the second Genesis story isn't sexist. The earth-creature *(adham)* in 2:7 isn't male but still sexually undifferentiated. Only in 2:22-23 do male and female appear -- together. Male doesn't appear first.

Ziegler argues that the ancient Hebrew or Levite authors of the Genesis stories imply a special association of the male with divinity. Even their God generally appears as a male. She points to historical, mythical, and archaeological evidence about the nature of the historical movement of which the Genesis stories are a polemical instrument. And she says it's patriarchy, in the process of smashing feminine and matriarchal constructions on things. The God of the Hebrews was *intentionally* male. And the male, in Genesis and throughout the Hebrew Bible, commands the position of domination over the female.

Pulling further asserts that the subordination of the woman, now put in

customed to seeing digital clocks and watches, a telephone voice stating the exact hour, minute and second would seem to fill the bill. But is *that* really telling time? The digital readout or a voice presents time without a context, a reading of the moment only, with no sense of past or future.

From the 14th century to the present, mankind has developed an understanding of time based on a clock dial—a surface that shows the relationship of time passed to time to come. The digital reading is a statement of what is, not what was ("quarter past") or what will be ("quarter till"). In *Tuck Everlasting,* Natalie Babbitt describes what life would be without the perceived passage of time: "We just *are,* we just *be,* like rocks beside the road." Indeed, a digital readout is as static as a stone.

—*Newsletter,* The Council for Religion in Independent Schools

Football coach **Chuck Noll:**

The nice thing about football is that you have a scoreboard to show how you've done. In other things in life, you don't. At least, not one you can see.

Geri Joseph:

The women's movement has never claimed that all women must have the same goals in life. They do not, and will not. Nevertheless, a Chinese wall poster suggests a binding, underlying truth: "Smash the thousand-year-old chains," it says. "Women can hold up half of heaven." —Minneapolis *Tribune*

Yehudi Menuhin writes of a visit with **Marc Chagall:**

He showed me his garden, and I asked whether he had ever painted it. "My wife came from a wealthy family in Russia," he said. "She has always had a garden, and this one doesn't mean so much to her. But my family was too poor for gardens. Now my garden is such a joy that I daren't paint it for fear it would disappear."

—*Unfinished Journey* (Knopf)

Cynthia Ozick:

Travelers are floating vagabonds, like astronauts out for a space walk on a long, free line. The matter-of-fact appears beautiful; a stone that at home would not merit the blink of your eye here arrests you with its absolute particularity.

For the vagabond-voyeur, nothing is not for notice: not a rock, not the shoulder of a passer-by, not a teapot. Nothing is so awesomely unfamiliar as the familiar. Nothing shakes the heart so much as meeting—far, far away—what you last met at home.

This is what travelers discover: that when you sever the links of normality and its claims, it is the teapots that truly shock. —New York *Times Magazine*

Rabindranath Tagore:

Let me not pray to be sheltered from dangers but to be fearless in facing them.
Let me not beg for the stilling of my pain but for the heart to conquer it.
Let me not look for allies in life's battlefield but to my own strength.
Let me not crave in anxious fear to be saved but hope for the patience to win my freedom.
Grant me that I may not be a coward, feeling your mercy in my success alone;
But let me find the grasp of your hand in my failure.

Terry Marotta

Looking For A Halo...

I sing in our church choir every Sunday.

We proceed down the aisle, all of us, and when we reach the front, the first thing I do is turn around and scan the congregation in search of my family.

They're easy to find. They always sit in the same place, the three people I belong to: my husband with his hair still damp from the shower; our first-grader sitting prim and inspirational beside him; and our three-year-old Annie, perched, as a rule, on her daddy's knee.

Now I haven't seen my family for an hour or so by the time the service begins, my presence in the choir having necessitated an early arrival at church for rehearsal purposes. To my husband, in my absence, has fallen the moist and messy job of bathing the girls, the delicate task of entering into complicated negotiations with them over what dresses they'll wear, and this the most taxing part of all, the chore of brushing and braiding and beribboning several square feet of fine female hair.

So I look for them right away from my place in the choir pews, to be sure that they're all properly buttoned up and smoothed out.

They look for me too, and the children wave like patriots greeting a wartime troop train when they first catch my eye. The older one subsides after a decent interval, but the little one waves and gestures and pantomimes untiringly at me. Her eyes never leave the choir section.

It must be a tremendous treat for her to see her mom up there in a long black robe, among a group of 40 people making eerie sounds...That's what I always thought it was, at least.

But the other day I think I found out the real reason for her fascination.

There's a young woman who sits beside me up there. The soprano soloist is what she is, with long wavy hair and a voice like an angel. When she sings alone, it all but lifts folks out of their seats. I know; I'm up front; I see their faces.

It has that effect on Annie, anyway. That much I'm sure of. It turns out she's the one Annie's really had her eye on:

You see, last Sunday after church, Annie told me something. We were in the kitchen, all of us. My husband was communing with the N.B.A. scores, I was washing some dishes, and the first-grader was drawing yet another study of the rainbow, this one with bunnies and giraffes cavorting beneath it. Annie was wrapping a little Santa Claus statue in toilet paper and urging it, with much parental reprimand, to lie down and take its nap.

A bubble of quiet rose to the surface, and Annie sidled over to me.

"I know who that lady in the choir is", she whispered. "The one with the long bumpy hair," she went on, "the one who sings alone."

"Who is it?" I asked her, trying to reciprocate her tone of gravity.

"That's Jesus", she told me, with undiluted awe in her voice. That lady's JESUS."

Now we're not in the habbit of scoffing at personal revelation in this house, and I wasn't about to correct her too hastily. I did ask her how she knew this was Jesus.

"I've seen pictures", she said, "I know what he looks like."

Our first-grader, of course, was not quite so forbearing. She rolled her eyes in the way that only the worldly-wise can do.

"Jesus lived a long time ago, dummy. He lived in Israel; this is Massachusetts."

"Anyway", she said, "Jesus was a MAN."

But Annie remained unconvinced.

"Well, he's back", she answered airily. "He's at our church. And this time he's a woman!"

And to her, it was true.

This young woman with her long hair and her sweet face and her unearthly voice wrapping around the ancient Latin text was Jesus enough for Annie.

Who can argue with a vision of such certainty?

Who'd be inclined to?

Not I, certainly.

And anyway, maybe she's right.

Maybe He is back.

Maybe He is a woman this time.

Or maybe he never left in the first place.

Maybe, just maybe He or She--the presenve that we sense in our lives and call God--has been here all the time.

Appearing to those on the lookout for him. To those with the readiness for belief of any small child.

XYZ CLUB

At long last a large group of excited people attended the Molly Picon production at Brandeis on March 24, after which they lunched at the Hillcrest Restaurant in Waltham. They travelled by bus.

On Tuesday, April 19, the X.Y.Z. will present an unusual program to be given in memory of one of our members, Samuel Kulvin. Mr. Kulvin's daughter and son-in-law, Barbara and Richard Shore, are both musicians and have planned a lovely, poignant concert.

Barbara is a violinist in the Fall River Symphony Orchestra and will perform a medley of Hebrew music in memory of her father. Richard Shore is a graduate of the New England Conservatory of Music. He has taught vocal and instrumental music in the public schools of Fall River. He specializes in composition, transposition and arrangements. His composition, "Genesis", a symphonic tone poem, was originally performed by the Fall River Symphony Orchestra in 1975. Mr. Shore will perform "Genesis" for the X.Y.Z. on the piano. The narration will be given by Mrs. Allen Goldberg.

This promises to be an outstanding concert. It will begin at 10:30 a.m. at the Temple Tifereth Israel, 539 Salem Street, Malden. Coffee will be served at 10 a.m.

The public is invited to attend.

They Finally Got Tony Out Of The Kitchen... Over 400 local guests turned out on Sunday night for the annual Children's Hospital fund-raiser-roast sponsored by the tireless efforts of Malden restauranteer Tony Brandano and his committee. With Tony's waitresses and kitchen staff volunteering their time for the worthwhile effort, those in attendance were treated to a sumptuous meal and lots of smoke-filled humor, most of which was delivered at the expense of local (un)dignitaries. Reportedly, the Sunday event was the first time that Tony B. was talked into sitting at the head table instead of spending the length of the affair working with the kitchen brigade. Pictured above, are front row: from left to right, Dom Fermano, James Mazzotta, Jim Semon, Tony DiSano and Tony Brandano. Back row: John McNeil, Dick Thistle, Mike Mrdjenovic, Fred McGovern, Jim Keohane, John O'Connor, Arthur Eld, Dave Parrotti, Paul Condon and George Mercuri.

Honor Tri-City Director

An open house reception honoring Anne P. Umana, the new Executive Director of the Tri-City Community Mental Health and Retardation Center, was held recently at the Centre United Methodist Church, Malden. Umana, who joined the staff March 7, is the former Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Mental Health. Prior to that she was the Regional Services Administrator for Region III, where she was responsible for the management of eight areas, four facilities and a budget of over $45,000,000.

The open house, hosted by the Tri-City Community Mental Health and Retardation Association, was attended by staff, corporators, local agency representatives and state and local officials.

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A Pink-Collar Worker's Blues

MY TURN/KAREN KENYON

More and more women every day are going out to work. A myth has grown around them: the myth of the "new woman." It celebrates the woman executive. It defines her look (a suit), and her drink (Dewar's or perhaps a fine white wine). It puts her "in charge." But it neglects to say whom she is in charge of—probably some other women.

The world still needs helpers, secretaries and waitresses, and the sad truth is that mostly women fill these serving roles. Today more women hold clerical jobs than ever before (4 million in 1950 and 20 million in 1981). Wherever we look, we see the image of the successful woman executive but, in fact, most women are going out to become secretaries. The current totals: 3 million women in management and 20 million clerical employees. So for the majority of working women—the so-called "pink-collar workers"—liberation from home is no liberation at all.

Recently I took a job as a part-time secretary in a department office of a university. I thought the financial security would be nice (writers never have this) and I needed the sense of community a job can bring. I found there is indeed a sense of community among secretaries. It is, in fact, essential to their emotional survival.

Human Beings: I felt a bit like the author of "Black Like Me," a Caucasian who had his skin darkened by dye and went into the South, where he experienced what it was like to be black. Here I was, "a person," disguised as "a secretary." This move from being a newly published author to being a secretary made it very clear to me that the same people who are regarded as creative human beings in one role will be demeaned and ignored in another.

I was asked one day to make some Xerox invitations to a party, then told I could keep one (not exactly a cordial invitation, I thought). The next day I was asked, "Are you coming to the party?" I brightened and said, "Well, maybe I will." I was then told, "Well, then, would you pick up the pizza and we'll reimburse you."

A friend of mine who is an "administrative assistant" told me about a campus party she attended. She was engaged in a lively, interesting conversation with a faculty wife. The wife then asked my friend, "Are you teaching here?" When my friend replied, "Well, no, actually I'm a secretary," the other woman's jaw dropped. She then said, "Don't worry. Nobody will ever guess."

I heard secretaries making "grateful" remarks like, "They really treat us like human beings here." To be grateful for bottom-line treatment was, I felt, a sorry comment.

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We think we have freed our slaves, but we have not. We just call them by a different name. Every time people reach a certain status in life they seem to take pride in the fact that they now have a secretary.

It is a fact that it has to be written very carefully into a job description just what a secretary's duties are, or she will be told to clean off the desk, pick up cleaning and the like. Women in these jobs are often seen as surrogate wives, mothers and servants—even to other women.

Many times, when a secretary makes creative contributions she is not given her due. The work is changed slightly by the person in charge, who takes the credit. Most secretaries live in an area between being too assertive and being too passive. Often a secretary feels she has to think twice before stepping in and correcting the grammar, even when she knows her "superior" can't frame a good sentence.

Envy: When after three months I announced to my co-workers that I was quitting, I was met with kind goodbyes. In some I caught a glimpse of perhaps a gentle envy, not filled with vindictiveness at all, but tinged with some remorse. "I'm just a little jealous that someone is getting out of prison," admitted one woman. "I wish I'd done that years ago," said another.

Their faces remain in my heart. They stand for all the people locked into jobs because they need the money, because they don't know where else to go, afraid there's no place else, because they don't have the confidence or feel they have the chance to do anything else.

I was lucky. I escaped before lethargy or repressed anger or extreme eagerness to please took over. Before I was drawn over the line, seduced by the daily rewards of talk over coffee, exchanged recipes, the photos of family members thumbtacked to the wall near the desk, the occasional lunches to mark birthdays and departures.

I am free now, but so many others are trapped in their carpeted, respectable prisons. The new-woman myth notwithstanding, the true tale of the woman on her own most often ends that way.

As I see it, the slave mentality is alive and well. It manicures its nails. It walks in little pumps on tiny cat feet. It's there every time a secretary says, "Yes, I'll do that. I don't mind" or finds ashtrays for the people who come to talk to someone else. The secretary has often forgotten her own dream. She is too busy helping others to realize theirs.

Kenyon, the author of "Sunshower," is working on a second book.